Sept. 24, 1990

THE NEW YORKER

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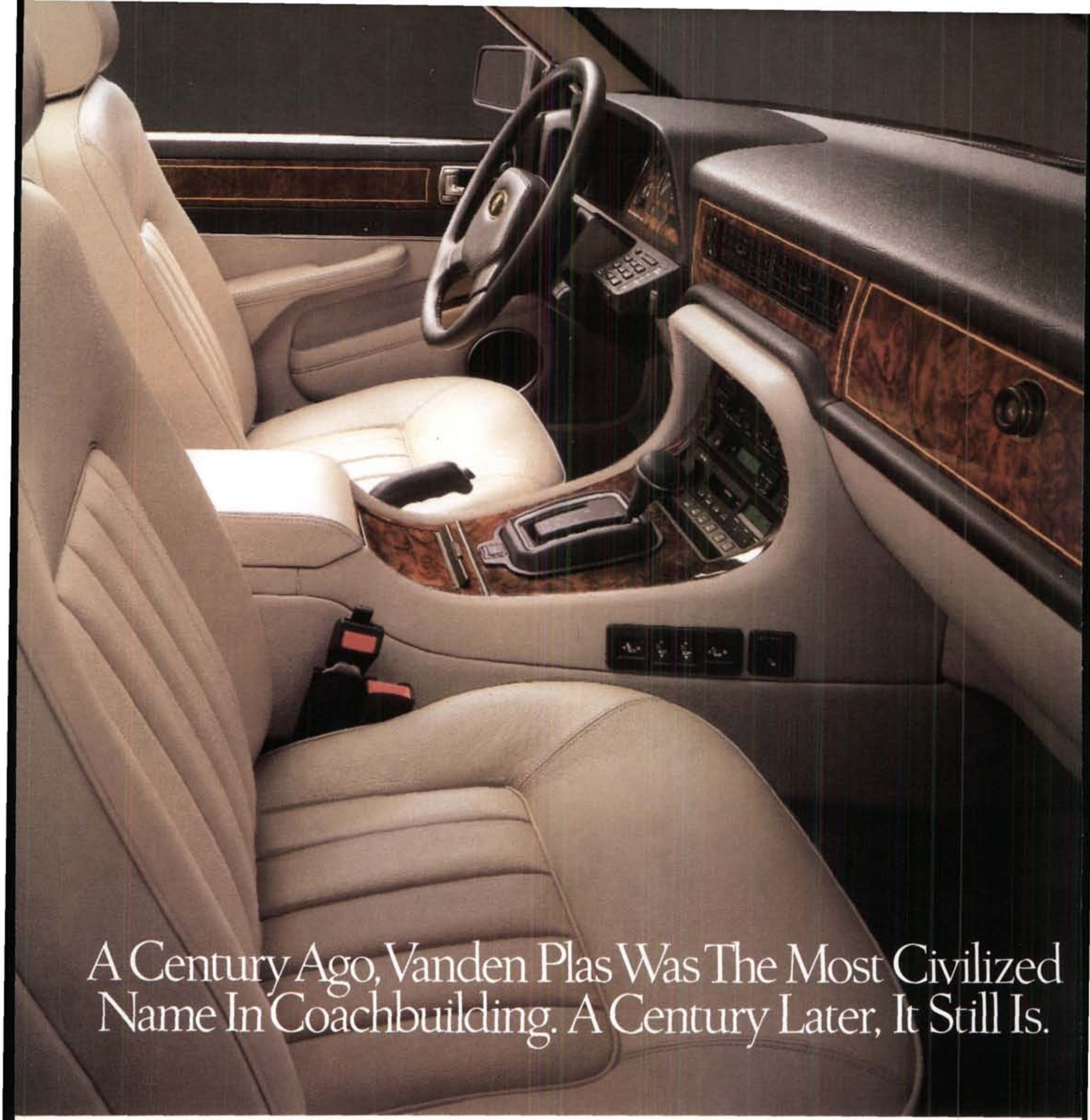
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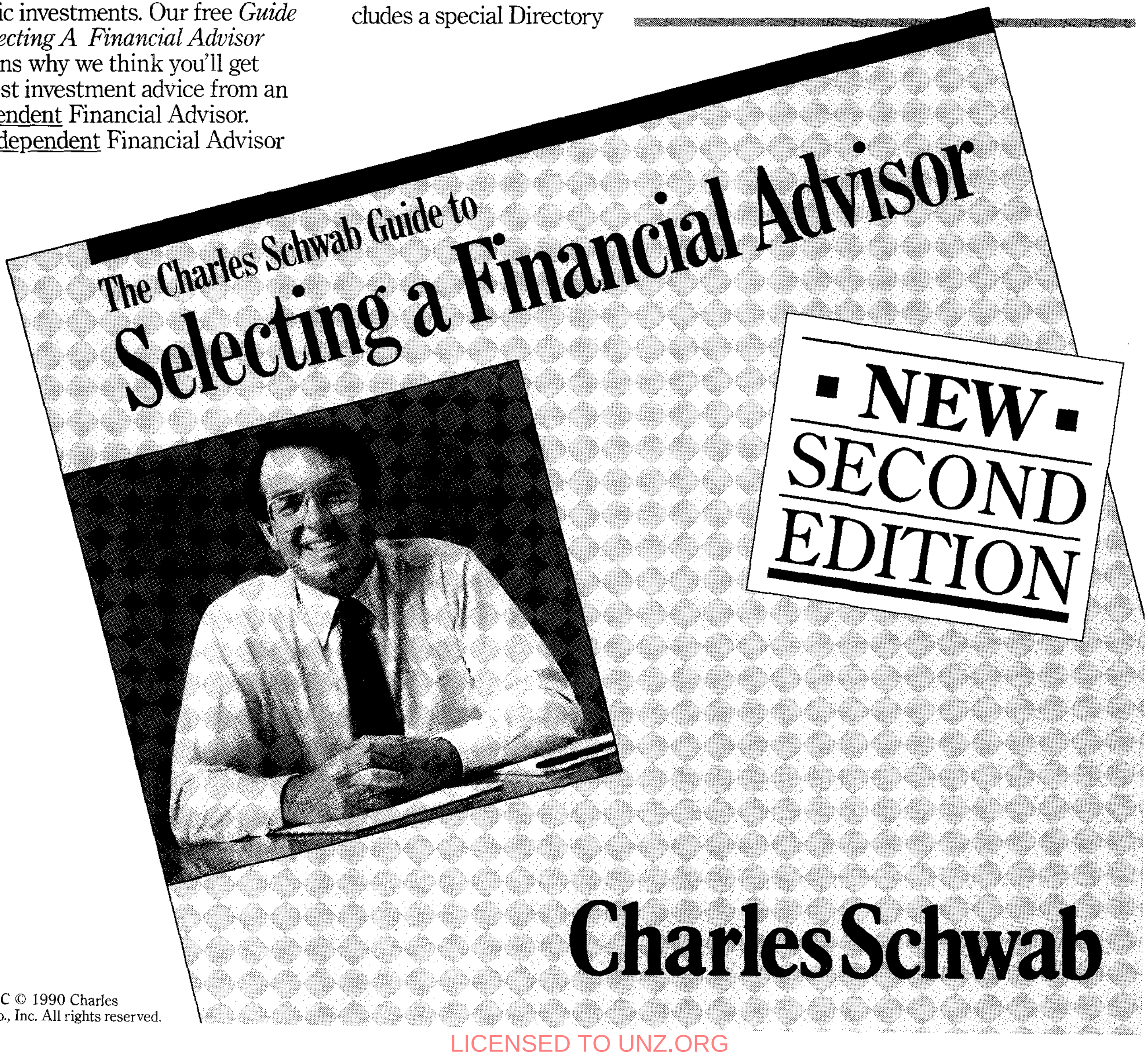

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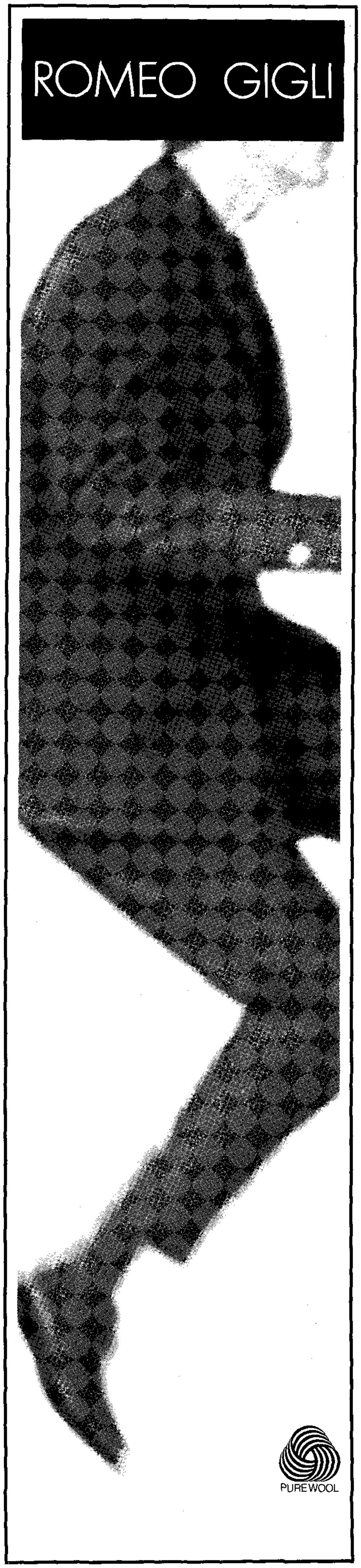

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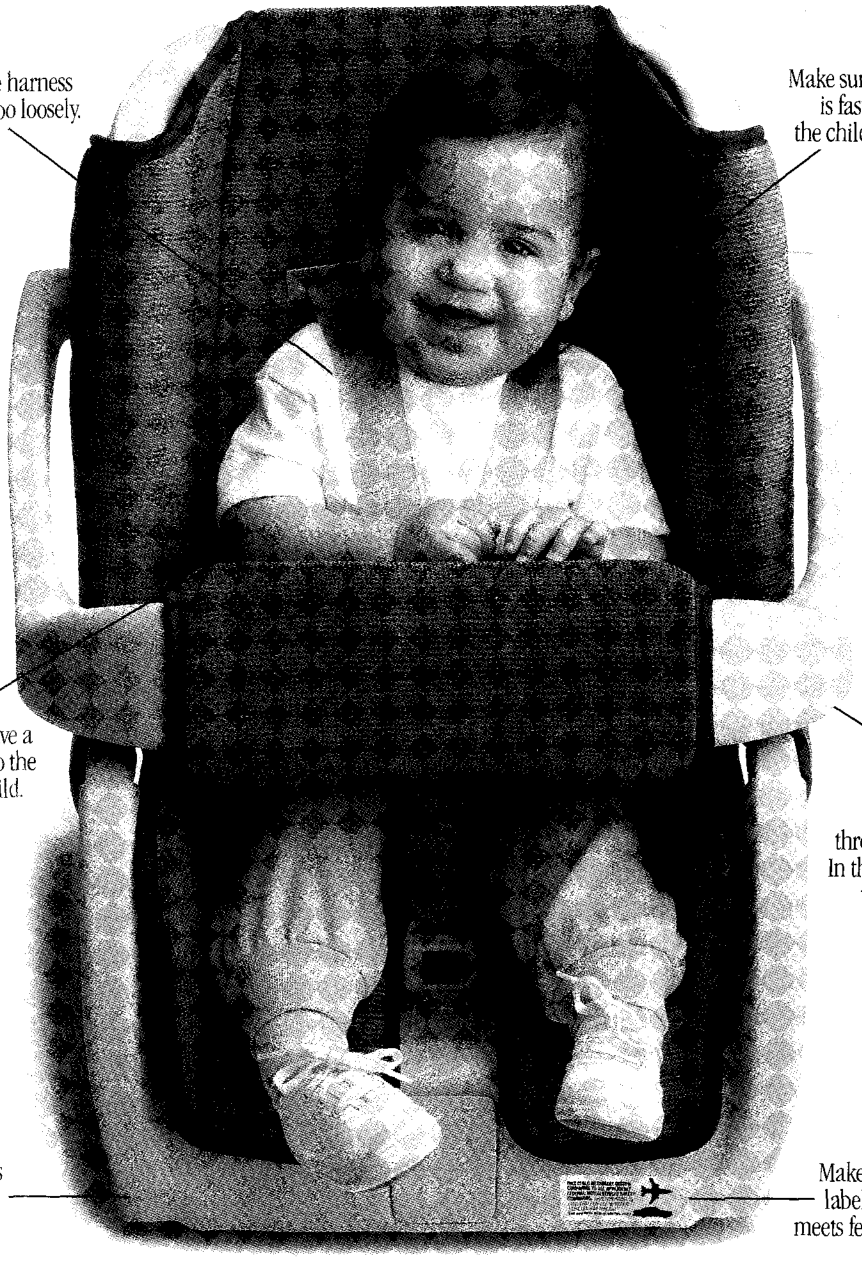

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

ONE of our regular professional correspondents, a Mr. David Powers, recently sent along a communication to the effect that, with the closing of "The Heidi Chronicles" on September 1, "A Few Good Men"—Aaron Sorkin's court-martial play at the Music Box Theatre—had suddenly become Broadway's longest-running non-musical. Mr. Powers, who knows what an interest we have in statistics, had done a little number-crunching for our benefit and come up with the fact that, until October 2, when Michael Feinstein opens at the Golden, "there will be five dark theatres on the 45th Street block between Broadway and Eighth Avenue, where the Music Box is located." (The other theatres are the Booth, the Imperial, the Plymouth, and the Royale.) The press release went on to announce that "tickets are now on sale at the Music Box for 'A Few Good Men' for Friday, November 23, at 3 P.M., and Sunday, December 30, at 3 P.M.," and that there will be no performances Thursday, November 22, or Monday, December 24. At the top of the page, Mr. Powers (who is nothing if not a wag) had added, in blue ink, "I hope we're the first to announce Thanksgiving and Christmas performances!"

Actually, Mr. Powers, you're not. We have before us a press release, dated August 27, announcing "THE CHRISTMAS REVELS: A HOLIDAY FESTIVITY," December 14 through 16 at Symphony Space. The event, "a holiday perennial," according to our friends at Friedman/Goetz Associates, "will be ushering in the winter solstice." Meanwhile, for those who want to do more with their lives than plan ahead, on September 24 Symphony Space will be offering an evening of great lyric poetry—four centuries' worth—read by Roscoe Lee Browne, Kate Burton, Jane Curtin, James Naughton, Christina Pickles, Anne Pitoniak, and Maria Tucci in a program to benefit Women in Need, a nonprofit organization providing shelter to homeless families in New York City. (For information, call 864-5400.)

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

THE MISER—Philip Bosco, Carole Shelley, and Mia Dillon star in Molière's comedy. Directed by Stephen Porter. Previews begin Sept. 21. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

WHATNOT—A musical comedy conceived and written by Howard Crabtree and Mark Waldrop, with a score and lyrics by Dick Gallagher. Mr. Crabtree, John Treacy Egan, Mark Lazore, and Jennifer Smith make up the cast. Opens Sept. 18 at 8, and runs through Oct. 6. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. For information about tickets, call 688-6022.)

YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL—Presenting "Hey Little Walter," by Carla Alleyne; "Believing," by Allison Birch; "Mutterschaft," by Gregory Clayman; and "Psychoneurotic Phantasies," by Gilbert Feke. Preview on Sept. 17. Opens Sept. 18 at 8, and runs through Oct. 6. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

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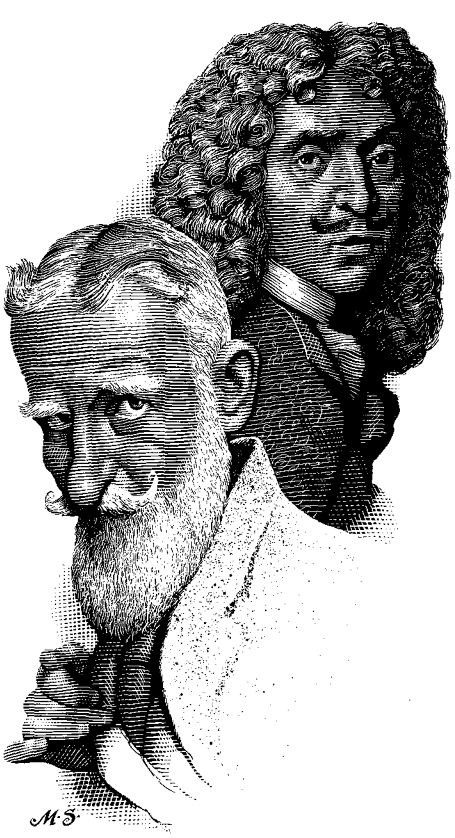

George Bernard Shaw ("Misalliance") and Molière ("The Miser")

RECENTLY OPENED

ASPECTS OF LOVE—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

BY AND FOR HAVEL—A pair of one-acters in revival. "By"—**AUDIENCE**—is based on an episode that occurred when Václav Havel had a menial job in a brewery; "for"—**CATASTROPHE**—is Samuel Beckett's poetic tribute to Havel when he was in prison. Together, they make an evening that is both comic and stirring. With Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway. (3/19/90) (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

CAMILLE—A revival of Charles Ludlam's 1973 play. With Everett Quinton (who also directed), Georg Osterman, Eureka, Cheryl Reeves, Jim Lamb, and H. M. Koutoukas. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

FALSETTOLAND—This latest installment of a three-part cantata by William Finn (music and lyrics) is a sequel to "In Trousers" and "March of the Falsettos." Mr. Finn's story presents a number of new elements (among them a bar mitzvah in the hospital room of a man who is dying of AIDS) before dissolving in its own syrup. The music sounds agreeable enough, and the performance goes smoothly, under the direction of James Lapine. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

FOREVER PLAID—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

FURTHER MO'—This lively, touching, and brilliantly performed small-scale musical, set in a New Orleans vaudeville theatre in 1927, is a real gem. Written by Vernel Bagneris (who also stars), it uses blues singing (mostly quite recherché songs) to say something about the plight of the black entertainer in American history and culture. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

IT'S STILL MY TURN—Terry Sweeney portrays Nancy Reagan in this one-man show. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

LETTICE & LOVAGE—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers in Peter Shaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

LIGHT UP THE SKY—This revival—after forty-two years—of Moss Hart's comedy about the Boston tryout of a Broadway-bound play is intermittently funny. The most entertaining scenes are those with Betsy Joslyn, as a producer's wife, who's engaged in a non-stop gin game with Peggy Cass, the star's mother; and, near the end, with the invaluable Bill McCutcheon, as a visiting Shriner. Among the other admirable performers are John Bolger, Linda Carlson, Humbert Allen Astredo, and John C. Vennema. Larry Carpenter directed. The handsome setting, by Andrew Jackness, of a suite at the Ritz-Carlton, was lighted by Dennis Parichy, and Martin Pakledinaz designed the appropriate costumes. Whatever Mr. Hart's intentions were, affection supersedes satire every step of the way; he was stagestruck. (9/17/90) (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes Sept. 23.)

MISALLIANCE—Shaw's comedy, presented by the Jean Cocteau Repertory company. Directed by Casey Kizziah. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

THE PIANO LESSON—August Wilson's newest drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes—even if the subtle ensemble acting in Lloyd Richards' production is thrown out of balance by an excessive performance by Charles S. Dutton. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

PRELUDE TO A KISS—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Mary-Louise Parker is the bride, and Timothy Hutton is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

QUIET ON THE SET—The action of Terrell Anthony's merry comedy, itself quite sudsy, is the taping of a single script of a popular soap opera, and it tends at times to be as confusing as its source. The able actors, who actually appear in soap operas, are exactly right; they are Beth Ehlers and Robert Newman of "Guiding Light" and Trent Bushey, Kate Collins, and the entertaining Matt Servitto of "All My Children." Rick Dennis designed the setting, and A. C. Weary directed. (9/17/90) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

THE ROTHSCHILDS—A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book), with a sixteen-member cast led by Mike Burstyn. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION—You're best off

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knowing nothing about the new John Guare play, other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright and the director, Jerry Zaks. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. What more do you want? With Swoosie Kurtz and Courtney B. Vance. (6/25/90) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Smoke on the Mountain—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Through the Leaves—A revival of a 1984 production of a play by Franz Xaver Kroetz. With Ruth Maleczech and Frederick Neumann. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while LaVern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirtieth birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **A FEW GOOD MEN:** "Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **GYPSY:** This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). With Linda Lavin. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCE

WE are always interested to hear descriptions of classical ballet—which is studied and performed by people on six of the earth's seven continents—as an élitist and inauthentic art form. Now, when we think élitist, we go to dance techniques that can't even be studied unless one is a member of a sultan's household. Until the end of the First World War, this applied to the centuries-old court dances of Java, which will be featured this week in several programs at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Around 1918, a school was established by two princes in Yogyakarta to teach some of these dances to commoners. One prince, Gusti Pangeran Aria Tedjakusuma, was considered a great dancer, as well as Java's most important dance teacher. For a while during the late nineteen-thirties, the pupils at his school included at least two Westerners. There was the dance anthropologist Claire Holt (1901-1970), who has come to be considered an influential Western authority on Indonesian dance. Another student was Xenia Zarina, a Belgian native who had been educated in classical ballet in the United States and performed programs of modern and ethnic dance both there and in South America. She toured the Middle and Far East in the nineteen-thirties, studying dance, and eventually settled in Mexico.

Sankai Juku at City Center

As it happened, both women published books in 1967 about Asian dance. (We found no record that they knew one another, or even that their books were critically compared.) Holt's landmark study, "Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change," is a dream: readable, reflective, keenly observant, and anti-schematic. Zarina's volume, "Classic Dances of the Orient," is also readable and informative, but very different. Part travel book, part dancer's memoir, part mini-encyclopedia, "Classic Dances of the Orient" describes court dances from India to Japan as Zarina tried to learn them, bringing her theatrical experience to bear. At one point, she describes a new prop that a group of Javanese female bedoyo dancers used in place of their traditional bows and arrows or daggers during their ritual duel. "Now each bedoyo unobtrusively drew from her corsage a large, ungainly pistol, and wearily raised it to aim," the passage begins.

The year was 1938. As Zarina tells it, the audience was hypnotized, and the Susuhunan, presiding as palace host, "beamed with pleasure."

Sankai Juku—The Butoh troupe in "Unetsu" ("The Egg Stands Out of Curiosity"), an evening-length work. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Sept. 18 at 7:30, Sept. 19-21 at 8, and Sept. 22-23 at 2 and 8.)

Court Art of Java—The New York début of a traditional Indonesian performing-arts troupe. Sept. 19 at 8 and Sept. 23 at 3: "Wayang Wong," a dance-theatre adaptation of a tale from the Mahabharata. . . ¶ Sept. 20 and Sept. 22 at 8: "Bedhaya/Golek Menak," a ritualistic dance work. . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 8 and Sept. 22 at 2: "Wayang Kulit," a shadow-play puppet-theatre piece. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Cumbre Flamenca—A troupe of Spanish flamenco dancers in the opening performances of an engagement that will run through Oct. 7 (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Sept. 25-26 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

WHEN all else fails, we stand on a chair. The other night—after failing to get to M.K.'s stage through the ordinary means of weaving and pushing—we got a leg up and took in a wonderfully bright, good-spirited set by the Japanese salsa band Orquesta de la Luz. M.K (Fifth Avenue at 25th Street) recently launched a couple of weekly live-music programs: "Musica Caliente" on Wednesdays and, for those who speak a different musical language, "Hot Jazz" on Saturdays. The club's "grand salon," where the shows are held, is a nice, vaguely surrealistic room featuring a pair of stuffed Dobermans, a wall-length fish tank, and two chandeliers so big and so low to the floor that one suspects the ceiling is descending and that at any moment one is going to be involved in something akin to the trash-compactor scene from "Star Wars." The stage is too small for a full-blown salsa outfit—the dozen-or-so-member Orquesta de la Luz looked like straphangers on a Madison Avenue bus. Still, after an overly loud trumpet was reined in, we found the club's sound system to be surprisingly good for salsa's *brrrs*, birdcalls, and general merrymaking. We've yet to sample one of M.K.'s "Hot Jazz" nights, but we've got a serious reservation: they'll no doubt ask us to remain seated.

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The companion volume, THE CIVIL WAR, An Illustrated History, by Geoffrey C. Ward, Ric Burns, and Ken Burns is available at all bookstores. Published by Knopf.

NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

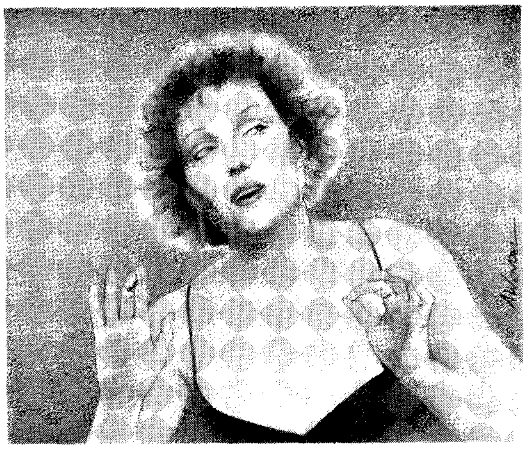
Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The Oak Room has at last awakened from its long summer siesta. San Francisco-bred singer **MARY CLEERE HARAN,** whose shows usually involve some Gershwin, some Irving Berlin, and some funny patter about the Summer of Love, is in residence as of Sept. 25. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine-fifteen, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

Apollo, 253 W. 125th St. (864-0372)—On Wednesdays, the theatre presents Amateur Night, a continuation of the legendary show that has launched the careers of such performers as Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Billie Holiday. Vocalists, dancers, musicians, and comedians participate. It's a chance to file away a memory for a later "I knew him/her when." Show time is seven-thirty.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek cabaret on the edge of Chelsea. The entrancing magician **JEFF MC BRIDE,** who, with his giant red mane and elaborate costumes, looks like a cross between Tina Turner and a Kabuki dancer, is in session until Sept. 29. On Sept. 24, Mr. McBride gets a night off when WNYC broadcasts a live radio show featuring performances by **KAREN MASON, MARGARET WRIGHT, BART HOWARD & CO.,** and the manic vocal trio **BETTY.**

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this club are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, in concert, by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. A few upcoming events: the Peggy Stern trio on Sept. 19, **LEE KONITZ'S** foursome Sept. 21-22, the Don Friedman trio on Sept. 23, and Dave Morgan's outfit on Sept. 24. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—At least once in his or her life, every native New Yorker should try to get a table at the Blue Note when **RAY CHARLES** is playing. It can be a frustrating experience—especially for those with an innate distaste for crowds or cover charges—but if you're up to it Charles will be here through Sept. 22. The singer-pianist turns sixty on Sept. 23. Music from nine. Dining.



Mary Cleere Haran at the Algonquin

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. A trio consisting of pianist **GEOFF KEEZER,** vibist **STEVE NELSON,** and bassist **BOB CRANSHAW** will be here Sept. 23, and the **BARRY HARRIS DUO** starts up on Sept. 24. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to **MONTGOMERY, PLANT & STRITCH.** This Houston-based vocal trio—Stritch also plays piano—has a wide repertoire of vintage Broadway standards and pop. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans' Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by leather-clad metalheads, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. **PANAMA FRANCIS AND THE SAVOY SULTANS** are in charge on Sept. 23. Music from eight to midnight.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—In the late seventies and early eighties, this dark cave (graffitied walls, a battered pool table, rest rooms for the intrepid only) was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene. While other clubs of the era have fizzled, CB's perseveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. The **CAVE DOGS,** a Boston group with a stripped-down sound and a knack for pop melodies, perform on Sept. 22. Music from nine-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from ten-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, posers, N.Y.U. students, skinheads—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—a Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls—and on peak nights there's a "take no prisoners" atmosphere. **SYLVAIN SYLVAIN** comes in on Sept. 21. Shows Sundays at nine, Mondays and Tuesdays at ten, and Wednesdays and Thursdays at eleven.

Dan Lynch, 221 Second Ave., at 14th St. (677-0911)—Outside Dan Lynch, you'll come across a lot of suspicious characters who'll claim to know you; inside you'll find a pupil-dilating, brown-on-brown bar decorated with remnants of a birch tree. The place brightens up considerably at ten with a variety of live blues, including vamps of the "put on your red dress" variety.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—The soul-food necessities—stacks of napkins, and glasses of water big enough to put out a brushfire—and plenty of peckerwood flotsam. (If this place weren't a restaurant, it could be a flea market.) Most nights, the buffet turns into a bandstand at nine. **ROB MATHES AND HIS BOY ELROY,** a Connecticut outfit that injects a dose of funk into songs by, say, Elvis or Bob Dylan, comes in on Sept. 21. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. The **JOHN ABERCROMBIE** trio winds up work on Sept. 23, and the **JOE HENDERSON** quartet begins a week-long gig on Sept. 25. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—Chinese food served in a plush greenhouse setting. Through the glass roof, which supports a jungle of greenery, you can admire the fruits of the midtown real-estate boom and, when available, the moon. A Steinway grand is encamped in the middle of the room, making things tricky for the waiters but improving the over-all quality of life. Sept. 18-22, the bench is occupied by **DAVE MC KENNA,** who has been called in these pages "the hardest-swinging jazz pianist of all time." Pianist **CAROL BRITTO** and bassist **HARVIE SWARTZ** claim Sept. 24, and violinist **RICHARD CARR** works with guitarist **HOWARD ALDEN** beginning Sept. 25. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

Indigo Blues, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A modernist night spot in the basement of the Hotel Edison. There's a glass-brick reception area, an oval blond-wood bar, and other interior-design novelties. The lighting—blue neon, in laserlike strips and wide halos—works on the eyes like a long day in front of the PC. **CORNELL DUPREE,** a veteran jazz guitarist from Fort Worth, Texas, is on hand Sept. 21-22, with Richard Tee. Music after nine.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An unpretentious second-floor jazz retreat The schedule: **FRANK UNDERWOOD** on Sept. 18 the **JOEL FORRESTER** trio on Sept. 19, **MIKE RENZ** on Sept. 20, the Clem Derosa Big Band on Sept. 21, the **ROY MERRIWETHER** trio on Sept. 22 pianist **DICK HYMAN** on Sept. 24, **RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT** on Sept. 25, and the Milo Peterson trio on Sept. 26. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. **RUSS KASSOFF** and **LINC MILLIMAN** are in swing Sept. 18-22; stride pianist **JUDY CARMICHAEL** and her regular sidekick, saxophonist **MICHAEL HASHIM,** come in for a week-long gig on Sept. 25. Music from about nine-forty-five.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music-and-performance space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. The Hoboken trio **YO LA TENGO** makes an appearance on Sept. 21. On their fourth and most recent record, "Fakebook," they have shelved their signature envelope-pushing electric guitars for a restrained, primarily acoustic sound, and the bulk of the material is obscure cover songs. The idea worked: the record has been a dark-horse summer sleeper. A five-night Klezmer festival kicks off on Sept. 22, featuring **DON BYRON** Sept. 22-23; the Zmiros Klezmer Quartet on Sept. 24; the **KLEZMATICS** and others on Sept. 25; and the New Klezmer Trio and Kapelye on Sept. 26. Music after nine.

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—A grungy but well-intentioned watering hole devoted to homegrown Brooklyn bands. The emphasis here is on exposed cement, although one wall is decorated with Polaroids—"St. Patty's 1986" (people in green hats and leis), "New Year's 1988-89" (people in red hats and leis). Lauterbach's microwave menu includes shepherd's pie and chicken parmigiana, but the musical menu is almost always a better bet.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant and bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry-potato chip hybrids. A bleary-eyed patron here was recently heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." Singer-guitarist **OTIS RUSH,** who started playing in Chicago bars in the mid-fifties and who soon became one of that city's ablest bluesmen, comes in on Sept. 20. **ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL** holds sway on Sept. 24. Music after nine. Dining.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club just off the West Side Highway (and no relation to the famed London venue). The scheme is black walls, a high ceiling, an upstairs with tables and a view, and a booming sound system. **DREAD ZEPPELIN** performs on Sept. 21, along with the **STRAWBERRY ZOTS.** The latter group, which hails from Albuquerque, is one of the more unabashed and rambunctious entries in the psychedelic-rock resurgence. The band's live shows often involve film, slides, mannequins, and TV monitors, among other things. Guitarist Brian Frosting says of this collection; "Everything we use in our stage set was found in the garbage or at the Goodwill."

Michael's Pub, 221 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. **MEL TORMÉ,** whose incredibly well-preserved pop-jazz baritone can currently be heard here, was singing on the radio regularly by the age of four. Since then, he co-wrote that song about "chestnuts roasting on an open fire"; he made his movie début, along with Sinatra, in "Higher and Higher"; and he penned a biography of Judy Garland, as well as his own autobiography, 1988's "It Wasn't All Velvet." Tormé will be performing with the **BUDDY RICH BAND.** Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

where a club soda costs about eight dollars. There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" Golden-girl singer-actress **SUSAN ANTON**, who made her Broadway début in David Rabe's "Hurlyburly" and who appeared in "Cannonball Run II," but who was never one of Charlie's Angels, is in residence through Sept. 22. **CAROL LAWRENCE** and **LARRY KERT** kick off on Sept. 25. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steakhouse, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Howie Wyeth's ragtime trio plays every Monday. Tuesdays are the property of **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS**, a band that relies on period instruments, old-fashioned felt-bannered music stands, and original-score arrangements to re-create the look and sound of a thirties swing outfit. Fridays belong to Rick Hardeman and the Basin Street Six, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. David Allyn and his big band tune up on Sept. 20. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

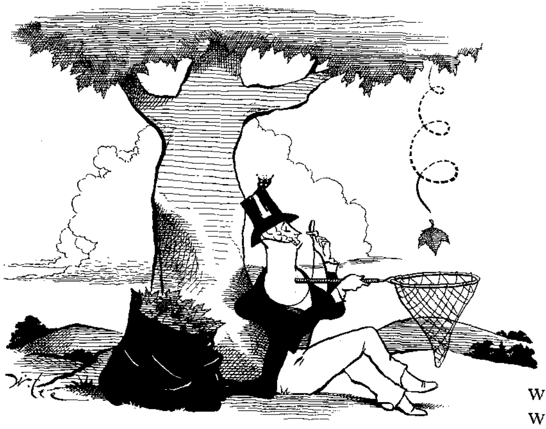
RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—The **SUNDAYS**, who will be here on Sept. 26, are one of this year's nicest surprises: a shimmering British pop band whose début album, "Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic," is notable for Harriet Wheeler's winsome, fluttering voice and guitarist Dave Gavurin's Smiths-style strumming. What's so disarming about the Sundays is that, although they occasionally make use of trippy rhythms and stream-of-consciousness lyrics, their music is actually quite hopeful and down to earth. Alas, when the Sundays played at the Marquee late last June, they gave a well-intentioned but slightly anemic performance, and the sad truth may be that the band's music is simply best heard at home on headphones. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. Pianist **MC COY TYNER'S** thundering hard-bop trio (**AVERY SHARPE** on bass; **AARON SCOTT** on drums) will be around for the next two weeks.

SWEETWATERS, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball, and, once in a while, a house photographer who offers to take a picture of you and your date. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is usually given over to soul and R. & B. performers. Sept. 21-22 belongs to **JUNIOR WALKER AND THE ALL-STARS**, Sept. 23 to the **JOSÉ ALBERTO** orchestra, and Sept. 26 to **MANNY OQUENDO Y LIBRE**. Music from nine.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Were we in the business of dispensing stars, we'd send three or four **ZACHARY RICHARD'S** way. The Louisiana-based singer-accordionist, who'll do his joyous zydeco stomping here Sept. 20-22, released "Women in the Room" not long ago—an album of music as whimsical as Lyle Lovett's and as wistful as Daniel Lanois's. Richard's live performances—he's quickly become a regular at Tramps—are as good an opportunity as Manhattanites are likely to get to do the Cajun two-step, although the singer's softer, more thoughtful side tends to get lost in all the shuffling. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an atticful of memorabilia, but the music is anything but stale. The young, brash neotraditional-jazz collective known as the **HARPER BROTHERS** will be in evidence Sept. 18-23. Pianist-composer **RANDY WESTON**, a descendant of Monk and Ellington as well as a student of African styles, brings in his trio for the week beginning Sept. 25. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.



ZANZIBAR & GRILL, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—A Murray Hill jazz resort, where the ceiling fans turn slowly, and the palm trees rustle tropically, and the jukebox contains Xavier Cugat and Perez Prado, and a waiter, delivering a plate of fried chicken and maple-pear corn bread to a customer, sings "It's suppertime" (to the tune of "Summertime"). The professional musicians tend to come on at around nine. Sept. 20-22 is in the hands of **LARRY CORYELL**, a jazz and fusion guitarist who is equally impressive on electric and acoustic instruments.

WINDOWS

In 1912, the French glass designer René Lalique was commissioned by the Coty perfume company to design windows for the façade of its Manhattan boutique, at 714 Fifth Avenue (between 55th and 56th Streets). Lalique responded with three hundred and ninety-one cast-glass panels, a collection of intertwining, flowering vines that rise from the second to the fourth floor of the building. In the decades following Coty's departure from the site, in 1941, the window complex—which is one of only two architectural projects in the United States with which Lalique is credited—was not kept in good repair. By the time the panels and the five-story building that they fronted were slated to come down in 1985 to make way for a new office tower, most people had completely forgotten about them. They were saved by a last-minute reprieve from the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the tower was built behind the historic structure.

As part of the new project, the Lalique windows have been restored and are currently visible to the neck-craning passerby on the opposite side of the Avenue. Though some of the glass panels had to be replaced by replicas, most were merely cleaned, polished, and reset. The lobby of the historic structure is also being refurbished, and this winter it will open as a public atrium from which the windows can be seen close up. Viewers inside the building may then have the not unpleasant sensation of beholding Fifth Avenue from within a vintage perfume bottle.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

MAYBE the original accusations of blasphemy weren't bogus after all. Maybe the owners of Limelight, the deconsecrated Episcopal church that fanatics once decreed damnable for heathens of the night, did make a pact with Beelzebub. How else has such a universally "Not me! Never!" club—one that fabuholics declared wouldn't last longer than A Flock of Seagulls' career—been able to raise hell for so long?

After seven years, only a driver with an uncreased out-of-state license would ever drive up Sixth Avenue after 10 P.M. and stay in the right lane beyond 18th Street, because he's going to get stuck behind either a conga line of Yellow cabs or a double-parked fleet of those white stretch Lincolns that probably have hot tubs in the trunk. What's worse, the interiors of the Lincolns evoke Elsie de Wolfe when compared with what now passes for design inside Limelight. What began as a witty visual psalm to the proud and the profane now looks like a discarded set for "The Lion in Winter." Lighting, unholy white and blinding, emanates from inside immovable hollow crowns. There is dark at the top and the bottom of the stairs, and hygiene seems to reflect the court of Richard I. Only the *Metropolitan Home*–Memphis-on-a-budget mélange in the lobby has any humor. But then, everyone seems to have checked a sense of same at the door, so you could say the congregation is still one-denominational.

But each nightfall brings the Limelight (47 West 20th Street) raging back once more. On Wednesdays, they've tried to singraft Larry Tee's Tuesday Night Love Machine at Palace de Beauté by renaming it Disco 2000. The Palace, however, has a highly appropriate Mylar-à-la-mode motif Varathaned into its gnarly floors and dusty, neoned brick walls, while Limelight can only bank on dank. Which may explain why heavy-metal fans are more comfortable here than are the painted narcissists who showed up on a recent Wednesday. Even the sixty-seven-year-old rockabilly swinger Cordell Jackson, a lace-gowned mama who could wipe out the Ventures just by tuning up, couldn't distract them from their attempts to position themselves to best advantage, a pretty tough mission when there are no mirrors and the lighting is as flattering as impetigo. Given such conditions, one might think the original fanatics were right. Why endure such an ungodly evening? Ah, but the power of prayer is no match for the power of a V.I.P. lounge. Build one, and they will come.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

KAREN FINLEY—In a reprise of "We Keep Our Victims Ready." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Sept. 18-22 at 8.) . . . ¶ Presenting a new work, "Imprudently Zealous," which is on a double bill with Laurie Carlos and Robbie McCauley's "Persimmon Peel." (Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage. Sept. 28 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 619-1955.)

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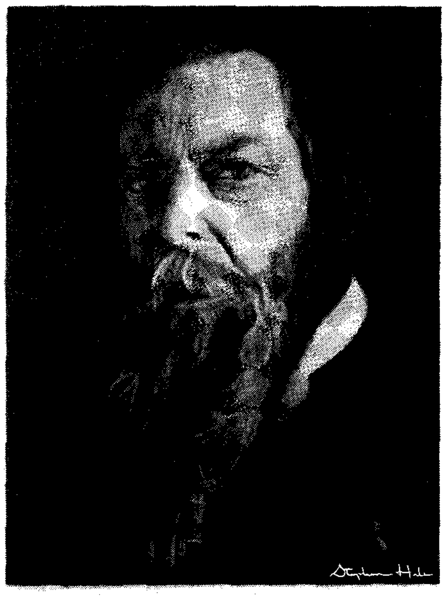


Albert Pinkham Ryder
at the Brooklyn Museum

ART

A POTENT new sculptural idiom has emerged, through which the contemporary landscape, or *mindscape*, is expressed in simultaneously literal and symbolic terms, and in a spirit that conjures film, photography, and even journalism as much as any earlier three-dimensional art. Outstanding shows last season by Cady Noland, Meg Webster, and Jessica Stockholder pointed to a veritable junk heap of formal and emotive influences that range from the Duchampian ready-made to the Rauschenbergian combine, from swashbuckling sixties work by Smithson or Chamberlain to zany seventies scatter-piece installations, and from the sort of high-style love of post-industrial decay that recalls a film such as Antonioni's "Red Desert" to a more chronic—and more Germanic—sense of ecological and spiritual disarray. The sculptor Rebecca Howland set the most recent precedent for this style a decade ago with her wonderful, jerry-built fountain "Brainwash," which was on view in various stages in the back yard of ABC No Rio, on the Lower East Side, throughout 1982.

Lisa Hein is another force to be reckoned with in this genre. Two works at Pat Hearn (39 Wooster Street; through October 6) suggest ambitious motives and dry wit. A large structure on the gallery's first floor consists of a wood-and-fibreglass basin, and a jutting steel tower with a brimming plastic back-yard kiddie pool on top. In a wonderfully cavalier use of prime gallery space, two very long, thin pipes extend from this exurban folly all the way to the back of the room, where we find a small, sinister-looking electric water pump: the source. Now untitled, the piece was built as a public-art project and originally called "Southwest: A Fountain for the California Delta." Hein, like certain writers we know, is a dry-country Californian who links "Western water politics" to a legacy of "individual unhappiness," and who works in a vernacular that is both bummed out and entertaining, intense and blasé. This sly tone is further in evidence on the second floor, where a much simpler structure, recalling work by the German artist Martin Kippenberger, suggests a more private sort of irrigation problem. Titled "Johnson and Jones"—hipster slang for, well, a dick and a habit—it consists of a spindly trestle, an oblong cardboard box with a black plastic garbage bag inside, and a beat-up electrical fan emitting little gusts of air into the bag.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A retrospective featuring eighty paintings and thirty drawings by the British artist Joseph Wright (1734-97). . . . ¶ Nineteen chalk-and-graphite drawings by John Singleton Copley (1738-1815). They are mostly studies for his enormous paintings, such as "The Ascension," "Siege of Gibraltar," and his portrait of John Adams. Starts Sept. 18. . . . ¶ "Glories of the Past" is an exhibition of bronze and marble sculptures, vases, and jewelry made between 5000 B.C. and A.D. 800 that focusses on works from the Mediterranean and the Near East. . . . ¶ "Art of Central Africa" is a dense and compact show drawn from the nineteenth-century holdings of the Museum für Völkerkunde, in Berlin, and includes some of the finest works known from Angola, the People's Republic of Congo, and southern Zaire. The range is quite extraordinary, but the strongest works are the "power figures," which were used for curing afflictions and for revenge. Through Nov. 4. . . . ¶ An exhibition of eighteenth-century Italian drawings, including works by Francesco Guardi, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, and others. . . . ¶ **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open (when the weather is fine), with a new lineup of twentieth-century sculptures and a sixty-five-foot shade-providing pergola. Through Oct. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

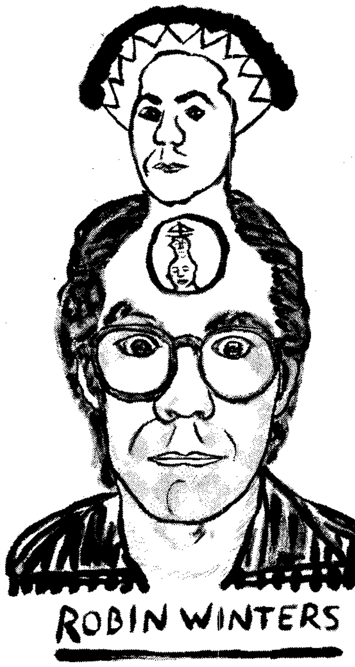
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"First Light." Printmaking is not a medium one would expect James Turrell to excel at, but this suite of twenty etchings is glorious. Each depicts a white "light" form—a triangle, a cube, a plane—floating in an otherwise darkened room, usually in a corner. The viewer is drawn to each form like a bug to light, and the effect is similar to that of the artist's sublime light environments. They recall the early corner paintings of Robert Moskowitz, but they are much more sensate. With their progression of shapes from print to print they are also reminiscent of the systemic drawings and prints of Sol LeWitt, although they are mysterious in a way LeWitt's never are. Through Nov. 13. . . . ¶ "Diagramming Microchips," a small exhibition of the large, colorful, computer-generated diagrams used to design microchips, is an attempt to bridge the gulf between high art and everyday objects that dominates our visual perception. Perhaps this show signals a return to the broader type of exhibition that once characterized this institution. Unfortunately, the microchip diagrams are displayed as if they were paintings, and as such they beg comparison with everything from Mondrian's "Broadway Boogie-Woogie" to pattern painting. The colorful, densely packed circuitry in a microchip is visually extraordinary and is best viewed on its own terms—for its gee-whizness. Embedded in some of the circuitry are signatures or logos of the chips' designers: computer-nerd graffiti. Through Oct. 30. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

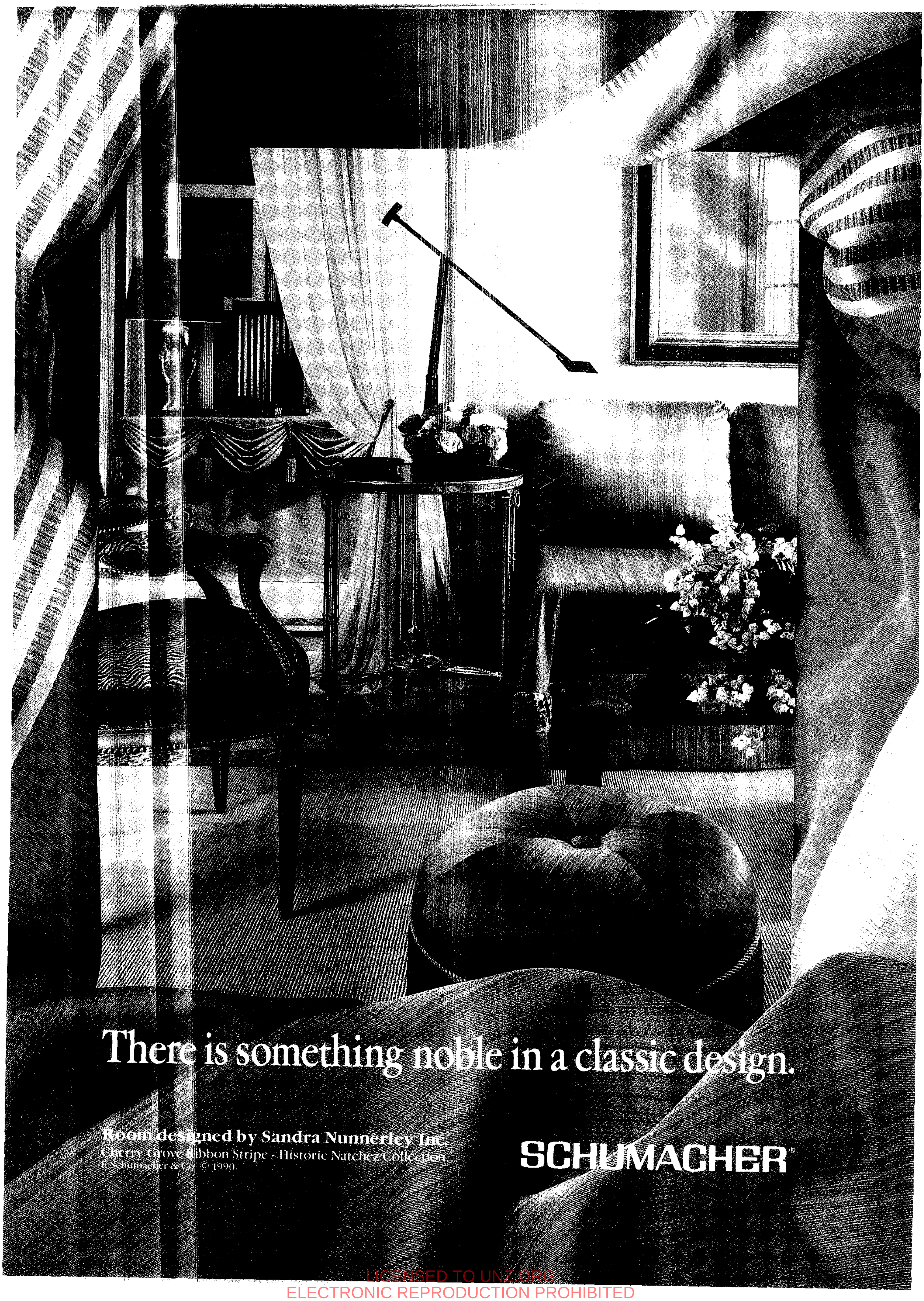
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A group of ten grisaille drawings by Ed Ruscha called "Some Los Angeles Apartments," made in 1965 in conjunction with the photography book of the same name. Ruscha is an artist who loves the look of graphics, and in these renderings of postwar residential buildings, such as the Bronson Tropics, the Normandie, and the Beverly Glen, you can see how meticulously he emulates the effects of airbrushing and other tricks. There is almost always a poetic absurdism to Ruscha's work. Here it is the fact that these portraits of existing apartment houses look like architectural proposals that have come straight off the drawing board. They are drawn as if they were meant to convince a developer. It is both funny and touching that this artist could have such vast and untrammelled hope about what may have inspired another to write a "Day of the Locust." Through Oct. 14. . . . ¶ A show of ninety-five paintings, constructions, and drawings by Burgoyne Diller (1906-65). (A show of drawings is at Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.) (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—An exhibition of sixty paintings by Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917). Starts Sept. 21. . . . ¶ "Caribbean Festival Arts" presents costumes, masks, videotapes, music, and photographs related to the traditional celebrations of Jonkonnu, Carnival, and the Islamic Hosay. The thirty-six costume ensembles include materials such as mirrors, feathers, sequins, and beads, and range from human scale to sixteen feet tall. Through Nov. 5. . . . ¶ A display of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings and works on paper titled "Monet and His Contemporaries." Included are five works by Monet, and others by Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, van Gogh, and Picasso. . . . ¶ Too little attention is given to installation art nowadays, but if this exhibition—the third in a series on artists working in Brooklyn—is an accurate representation, it's best left in obscurity. Much of the fifth floor of the museum has been converted into a sort of freak show, but one low on entertainment value. There are "pictures" that tell stories when you open their doors, paintings that emit music, works that light up, even a fountain that churns what looks like cherry-colored septic waste. And the sometimes provocative collaborative group TODT is represented by a trite work, best described as a yucky post-industrial surgery center, complete with metal catwalks, X-rays of deformed children, and examining-room furniture that suggests torture. Through Oct. 15. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Court Arts of Indonesia" reconstructs a Javanese *kraton*, or court, to display more than a hundred and fifty works of art from the eighth century to the twentieth. Included are elaborate shadow puppets, a jewelled *rebab* (a stringed instrument) from Bali, and ritual marriage figures. Starts Sept. 19. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)



Self-portrait by Robin Winters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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—Seventy-eight drawings and watercolors by the German artist Adolph Menzel (1815-1905). Through Nov. 18. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St.—An exhibition of eighty leather-bound, gold-tooled bookbindings from Renaissance France and Italy. Through Nov. 24. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto." Eighty-five photographs taken in September, 1941, by Heinz Jöst, who was a member of the German Army at the time. The show reveals the profound role photography can play in feeding memory and recording history. The images—of starving men, women, and children; of the dead piled in mounds—are a violent shock to the psyche. A quote on display from a diary kept by a fourteen-year-old during that period says it plainly: "All these scenes are very hard to bear and I go home sad." Through Nov. 1 . . . ¶ "Why I Got Into TV and Other Stories." Ilene Segalove is a regular on the video circuit. Her taped stories, as well as her radio programs and photographic collages—the subject of this "mid-career" retrospective—are about growing up in TV land. The works define the chasm between her mother's generation of happy homemakers and her own generation, between the ideals of male art and the everyday realities of women. Her stories are delivered, as one might expect, with a heavy dose of irony. Sometimes her wives have shaken their shackles: one tape begins with the narration, "Prometheus Unbound: Gloria Unbound. I haven't worn a girdle in twenty years." But often their liberation consists of no more than overthrowing the tedium of homemade clothing starch with wash-and-wear leisure suits. There are moments of surrealistic resonance, like the videotape of a wife who declares, "I thank God every day that I was born in California," or the photograph in which the artist has erased her nipples in imitation of Barbie. But for the most part Segalove's work falls flat and remains in the shadow of Baldessari's. Through Nov. 1. . . . ¶ A show of ten paintings and drawings, and a contemporary interpretation of a sukkah, or improvised shelter, by the artist Eli Content. Through Nov. 1. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, except Sept. 20, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"From Receiver to Remote Control" explores the impact of the television set on twentieth-century America. On display are more than a hundred old and new sets, along with VCRs and other TV paraphernalia. Viewers even have a chance to participate in some of the installations (don't touch that dial!). Through Nov. 25. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—An exhibition that reunites more than sixty American paintings that were displayed at the 1889 World's Fair, in Paris. Included are works by John Singer Sargent, Theodore Robinson, William Merritt Chase, and James McNeill Whistler. Through Nov. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—"Keith Haring: Future Primeval." More than seventy paintings, sculptures, and drawings by Haring (1958-90). Through Nov. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"Home: Contemporary Urban Images by Black Photographers." More than ninety works by eleven photographers. . . . ¶ Eighty-one contemporary works, including paintings, sculptures, photographs, musical instruments, and videotapes, make up "The Blues Aesthetic," an exhibition that explores the impact of African-American culture on twentieth-century art. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26			

Willem de Kooning—For the past forty years, this astonishing painter has inspired more patricidal impulses of the Oedipal kind than any other artist since Picasso. Rauschenberg quite literally rubbed him out in 1953, and from that point on de Kooning's euphoric, Rubensian brushstroke became the perennial catalyst for parodies, aesthetic coups, and veneration by returning prodigals. The earliest work in this brisk, lucid show dates from 1940. Titled "Glazier," it is one of the artist's psychologically compelling and relatively unsung portraits of men. It was made during the peak of his friendship with Arshile Gorky, whose febrile, introspective influence is in this case visible. De Kooning's wild fifties women are of course represented, too. There is a carnivalesque "Marilyn Monroe" (1954) and MOMA's epochal "Woman II" (1952), in addition to works on paper. While these female figures are hieratic and agitated in the extreme, neither seems quite the fearsome, fleshy, and even man-eating entity that many art-history teachers, circa 1975, liked to believe. Included as well are three sweeping, magisterial abstractions from 1958-61, a magnanimous period, along with a couple of more fevered, florid seventies works that look good—which has not always been the case. Most thrilling, however, are two paintings from 1984. In these technically incomprehensible canvases, pure flame licks of primary color seem to have soared skyward into a sun-drenched cloud chariot of white. It's like Mondrian by Tiepolo—experience this buggy ride and die! Through Oct. 13. (Salander O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**robert birmelin,** Bernard, 33 E. 74th St. (through Oct. 6); **herbert ferber,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Oct. 4); **david robilliard,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 6); **frank stella,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through Oct. 20).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

"Heads"—A show that skirts the issue of portraiture and opts instead for an admirable range of paintings, photographs, and sculptures of heads. Included are a Cindy Sherman photograph of the artist as a wart-nosed Fleming, Andres Serrano's diptych photograph aptly titled "Piss Pope," a very calming large photographic portrait by Thomas Ruff, and a Chuck Close portrait of Francesco Clemente, who seems to be staring out of a crystallized fog. The display, spread over two floors, can be seen as either a very thoughtful assortment or as some leftover inventory in search of a purpose. A look at the works exhibited upstairs suggests the latter to be true. Through Sept. 22. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**robert arneson** and **joan brown,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 13); **joanne carson** and **jan holcomb,** Siegel, 24 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 6); **giorgio cavallon,** Mc Coy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 27); **james cook,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 10); **lovis corinth,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 3); **barry flanagan,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 13); **maurice golubov,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (through Sept. 25); **harry holtzman,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 27); **douglas huebler** and **michael gonzalez,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 6); **michael kessler,** Tilton, 24 W. 57th St. (through Sept. 29); **muntadas,** Kent, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 6); **beverly pepper** and **burgoyne diller,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 6); **ferran garcía sevilla,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 6); **bonnie sklarski,** Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 10); **pat steir,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 6); **stephen tanis,** French, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Sept. 29); **john wilde,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Sept. 29).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Lynda Benglis—Early on, this artist made some very bold forays into issues of femininity v. masculinity, and she worked in a sweeping range of mediums, from advertisements to poured paintings. But for quite some time she has remained content making painted sculptures that celebrate a feminine sensibility but seem choked by their own endlessly reworked elegance. This continues to be true with her newest pieces, large polished-aluminum arrangements of fancifully knotted Fortuny pleats. Through Sept. 29. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds—A Native American artist who appropriates a Western aesthetic to examine racism in America in a most eloquent way. His primary vehicle is words, either starkly typeset on posters and billboards in the manner of Lothar Baumgarten, a German artist working in a very similar manner, or drawn in scratchy pastel letters on paper. His most affecting pieces are the public works, represented here by photographs and a few leftover components. Even when Heap of Birds is at his angriest—as in a public work he made in response to a Canadian-government policy whereby Indian women married to white men can no longer be recognized as Indians—the work is poetic and dignified. While the simple text is a call for resistance to mandated racism, it has the emotive presence of a silent vigil. The show also includes a number of colorful paintings of interlocking feathery shapes that use the strategies of European abstraction to express issues of Native American identity. Through Oct. 6. (Exit Art, 578 Broadway.)

Ralph Humphrey (1932-90)—It is somewhat baffling that these very beautiful "Frame Paintings" of 1964-65 are rarely mentioned alongside the work of Jo Baer, Robert Ryman, and Agnes Martin, who have got the lion's share of credit for dealing with similar ideas at the same time. Humphrey's works are in grayed colors, and while their imagery clearly refers to the structure of painting, their gestures suggest that they are all about light and a personal experience of environment. Through Oct. 6. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Cary S. Leibowitz—This artist also goes by the name CandyAss, and, judging by the current installation, using an alias, however tiresome, could be his most compelling act. In the first gallery, he attempts to portray a boy's-room aesthetic gone berserk, with touches of rebelliousness and ennui, neither carried out with zesty style or poignancy. The walls are festooned with large banners and felt pennants that cheer on sophomoric self-involvement: "LIFE SUCKS," "DON'T LOOK 4 ORIGINALITY," "DON'T PRETEND 2 LIKE IT." The next two rooms are slightly more reflective, but no more challenging. Through Oct. 6. (Stux, 155 Spring St.)

Ana Mendieta (1948-85)—On the darkened third floor of a gallery that is in the process of becoming a starkly glamorous shrine to the new and austere nineties funk, viewers will find an exhibition of Mendieta's 1976 installation "Nanigo Burial." The piece consists of an ambiguous outline on the floor—almost but not quite a cruciform, almost but not quite the shape of a fallen body as it might be drawn, on site, by the police. This disturbing silhouette is ringed by a low forest of black candles that evoke a witches' Sabbath or the rites of the Caribbean cult known as Santeria. It is a grandly beautiful work. Also eerie, to say the least. Through Oct. 27. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St.)

David Nelson—This artist has a nice touch in his scraped paintings and rubbed drawings, but the work is essentially boring. Also included in this show are several stacks of etched windowpane glass that seem to contain various geometric shapes, which change depending upon your viewing angle; these works are nothing more than tricky. Through Sept. 29. (Petersburg, 130 Prince St.)

Robin Winters—It's always a joy to see how Winters has chosen to work his magic, skillfully riding the edge between mastery and subversiveness. His current material is sculptures of heads: goofy behatted ones made of crystal; craggy bronze ones, fuzzed like Rodin waxes, some topped by Devil horns or figurative objects; and shelves of little glazed

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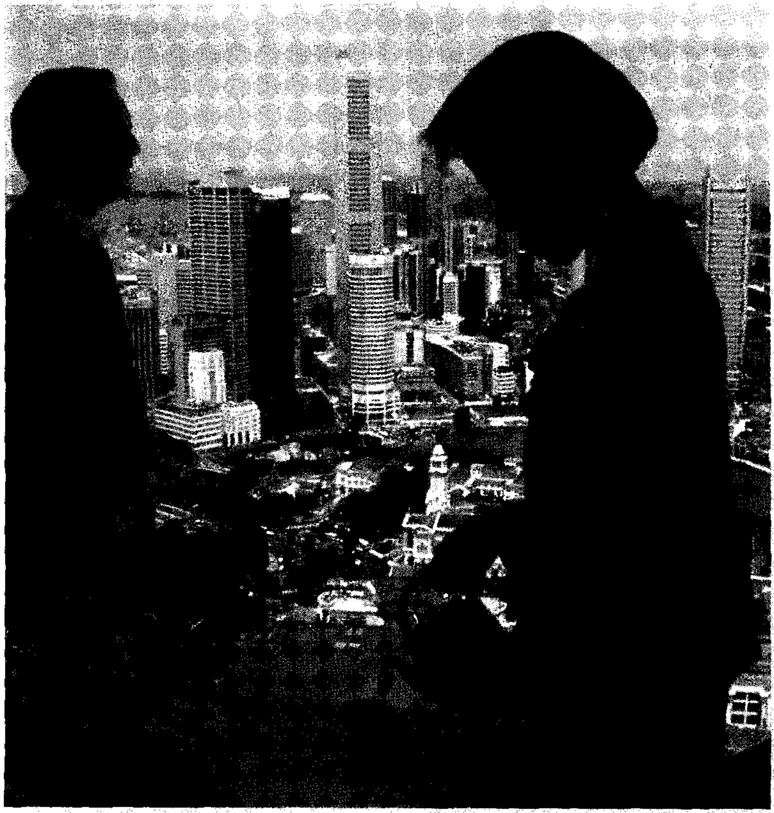

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clay ones, which are the crudest and possibly the most absorbing. A mound of yellow ceramic crowns, which look a lot like the SAMO crown Jean-Michel Basquiat used to draw, may well be a requiem for all the fallen graffiti kings, or for imperiousness in general. There is also a gathering of bronze sceptres that look like amalgams of artifacts from almost any past civilization—Etruscan, Mesopotamian, African. Through Oct. 3. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

"Godhead"—The Feature gallery specializes in fun group shows of works with great personality that seem to shun the cult of style. The current one includes a painting of a tree surrounded by eyeballs, one of a mustachioed, pink-skinned boy partially submerged in water, and a sculpture of an industrial-sized roll of toilet paper. Through Sept. 29. (484 Broome St.)

"The Lazaretto"—A group of artists working anonymously have created a labyrinth, lined with stories written primarily by people with AIDS, that leads eventually to a darkened sculptural environment of a grotesque death barge adrift on a red satin sea filled with drowning souls who look like they've been lifted from Rodin's "Gates of Hell." The show seems to pose the question, Which is more wrenching—the true-life stories written matter-of-factly on large sheets of paper, or the extremely horrific, heavily crafted sculptural portrayal of death? In one particularly degrading story, a man writes, "I spent nine days in a hospital emergency room corridor. They sent me home when I refused a colonoscopy in the hallway. I demanded a room and got a discharge instead." In another, a woman describes how she bruises so easily that it's painful whenever her mate rolls against her in bed. "I wouldn't want to sleep separately from him," she writes. "You know we don't make love anymore. . . . So all we really have is touching and, you know, talking and feeling." At the entrance to and exit from the show are mounds of literature about AIDS from numerous community-based organizations, along with condoms, needle-bleaching kits, and fact sheets. It's an exhibition that should be in a public space. Through Sept. 29. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

"The Collectors' Cabinet"—What a great idea for a show. Instead of gathering obvious expressions of conspicuous consumption, curator Carole Ann Klonarides has searched the darker side for the kind of curios David Lynch might collect: Helen Chadwick's transparencies of brains, for example, and Laurie Palmer's huge atomizers of synthesized sweat on lacy pillow perches. Unfortunately, the idea is more interesting than much of the art, and the endlessly pretentious narration of Gary Hill's videotape adds to the viewer's impulse to flee. Nonetheless, the show provides much to think about. Through Sept. 29. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Short List—**norman barr** and **jules halfant**, Teller, 568 Broadway (through Oct. 6); **saint clair cemin**, Audiello and Sperone Westwater, both at 142 Greene St. (through Oct. 13); **eric de la cova** and **martin wong**, Plumb, 81 Greene St. (through Oct. 13); **robert engel**, Donahue, 560 Broadway (through Oct. 6); **rafael ferrer**, Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (through Oct. 3); **patrick ireland**, Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 1); **james little**, Kelly, 591 Broadway (through Oct. 2); **irena martens** and **sally eckhoff**, Perlow, 560 Broadway (through Sept. 29); **andrew masullo**, Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Oct. 6); **kathleen mc carthy**, Gracie Mansion Gallery, 532 Broadway (through Oct. 6); **pieter laurens mol**, Louver, 130 Prince St. (through Oct. 6); **peter nadin**, Gorney, 100 Greene St. (through Oct. 13); **richard nonas**, Burgin, 130 Prince St. (through Oct. 20); **cliffton peacock**, Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 13); **adrian piper**, Weber, 142 Greene St. (through Sept. 29); **sal scarpitta**, Greenberg Wilson, 560 Broadway (through Oct. 20); **robert stackhouse**, Dolan Maxwell, 154 Wooster St. (through Oct. 6); **william steiger** and **akiko mashima**, Condeso-Lawler, 76 Greene St. (through Sept. 29); **masami teraoka**, Auchincloss, 558 Broadway (through Oct. 13); **eugene von bruenchenhein**, Thorp, 103 Prince St. (through Oct. 13); **david winter**, Toll, 146 Greene St. (through Sept. 29).

OTHER GALLERIES

Arthur Getz—An exhibition of forty-seven sketches and original paintings for *New Yorker* covers. Through Oct. 13. (Illustration House, 96 Spring St.)

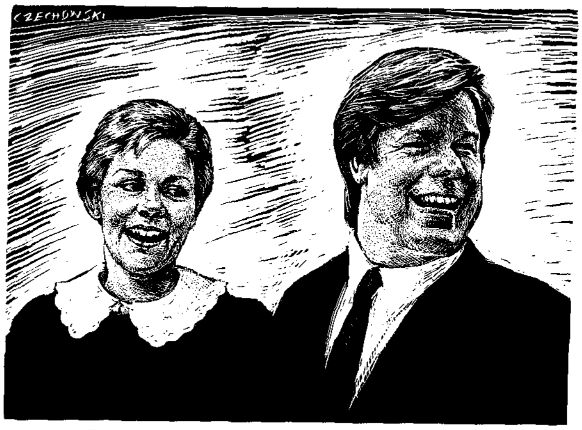
PHOTOGRAPHY

YET another Man Ray show opened recently. It is a testament to the vitality of his work that it remains interesting after so much exposure. Although this latest exhibition (at I.C.P. Midtown) is titled "Man Ray/Bazaar Years: A Fashion Retrospective," it contains more than this heading might suggest. The show clearly demonstrates what Man Ray exemplifies: that art can occur wherever an artist chooses to do his work. Man Ray's fashion photography reflects the same original vision that his more official "art" does. In fact, fashion and advertising turn out to have been natural stimuli for his surrealist vocabulary. What could be more surreal than a lipstick story featuring a closeup of a thirties beauty—in black-and-white, except for hot-red lips—with the boldface headline "THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE"?

Lady Clementina Hawarden (1823-65)—Lady Hawarden is no longer a delicious secret, now that a show of her Victorian photographs has been organized. She treats her female subjects with unparalleled grace; she wraps them with light, reflects them in mirrors, and presents them as embodiments of soul, isolating this sense of exquisite internal life in interiors that are pregnant with aura. This is work of astounding subtlety and beauty. Through Oct. 9. (Museum of Modern Art.)

Sandy Skoglund—This artist's installations are a balancing act between kookiness and incredible things made somehow plausible. In her newest piece, "The Green House," the Borden gallery's door, floor, and walls are covered with green straw, as are the furniture and objects that fill the room. Practically the only things that aren't green are twenty-two sculptures of dogs—and they're purple. Photography crops up here in several ways. All around the room are little green straw-covered frames of the type one usually fills with family pictures. And in the back of the installation is the climax of the piece—a large photograph of a green room (actually the artist's studio) that's almost identical to its re-creation in this gallery. Through Sept. 29. (560 Broadway.)

Short List—**werner bischof**, International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through Nov. 11); **larry clark**, Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. (through Oct. 13); **michael eastman**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Oct. 20); **evergon**, Shainman, 560 Broadway (through Oct. 6); **candida höfer**, Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. (through Oct. 6); **mark klett** and **nan goldin**, Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 20); **ken lum**, Rosen, 130 Prince St. (through Oct. 13); **joel meyerowitz**, Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through Oct. 13); **ryuji miyamoto** and **hiroshi osaka**, Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (through Oct. 31); **richard pare**, Sikkema, 155 Spring St. (through Sept. 22); **stephen john phillips**, Fendrick, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St. (through Sept. 29); **man ray**, International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; through Nov. 25); **richard ross**, Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Oct. 6); **kenneth snelson** and **nicholas nixon**, Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 6); **thomas struth**, Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 13); **josef sudek**, Photofind, 138 Spring St. (through Oct. 20); **susan unterberg**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Oct. 13).

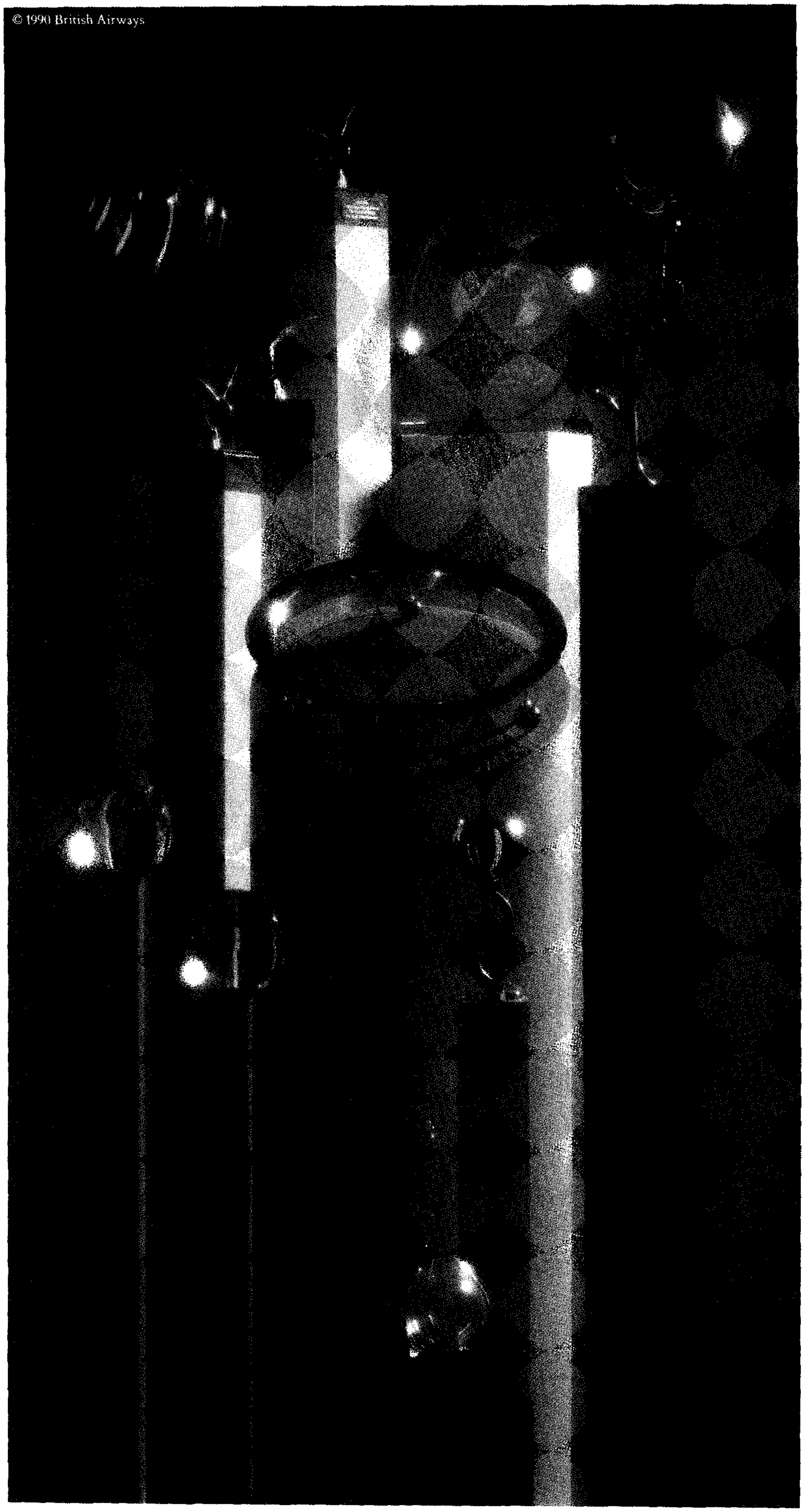


Barbara Bonney and Håkan Hagegård

MUSIC

THE concert world has its ripples of fashion, and duos are "in" this season. At the 92d Street Y, the "Mastersingers" series this year offers two putative mastersingers each time around. The Swedish baritone Håkan Hagegård leads off with music by Monteverdi, Schubert, Brahms, and others on September 23, in a joint recital with Barbara Bonney, an American soprano who is new but busy on the opera and recording scene. We think of Mr. Hagegård as a first-rate singer who has never quite decided at what level of thought and feeling he should pitch his expert vocalism. (At the Y several years ago, he teamed up with another soprano, Judith Blegen, and indulged in advanced cutesy-poo; on other occasions he has been both sensitive and a little bland, but he can sing with dignified elegance, and he is drawn more to refined and serious material than to obvious potboilers.) Ms. Bonney we know only from records, where she comes across as a lovely singer looking for a dash of personal flavor. Later in the series come James Morris and Susan Quittmeyer (who, like Mr. Hagegård and Ms. Bonney, are husband and wife), and then Benita Valente and Tatiana Troyanos, who have been singing opera and concerts together regularly in recent seasons. (Another Y series features the American song duo of Bolcom and Morris.)

In the meantime, the day after the Hagegård-Bonney duo sings, the Ax-Ma duo will play sonatas on the same stage. Emanuel Ax and Yo-Yo Ma have been among the most satisfying interpreters of chamber music for years, and are surely preëminent among current exponents of the cello-and-piano literature. Mr. Ax has always been an artist to present musical details with a fresh, precise, buoyant advocacy; Mr. Ma at his best has a specific musical responsiveness that matches his sovereign technique and rhapsodic air (and, in our experience, he has always been at his best in Mr. Ax's company). We feel that we have heard some of our favorite sonatas as much analyzed as performed by this pair—but the analysis has been like kindling to fire the performing impulse, not cerebration to check it.



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OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—The opening performances of the season, which will run through April 20. **LA BOHÈME,** with Mirella Freni, Barbara Daniels, Placido Domingo, and Brian Schexnayder; conducted by Christian Badea. (Sept. 24 at 7.) . . . **DER ROSENKAVALIER,** with Felicity Lott, Anne Sofie von Otter, Barbara Bonney, and Aage Haugland; Carlos Kleiber. (Sept. 25 at 7:30.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** with June Anderson, Jerry Hadley, and Juan Pons; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Sept. 26 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—**FROM THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD,** in English (with supertitles), with John Absalom, Jon Garrison, Eugene Perry, John Lankston, and Harlan Foss; conducted by Christopher Keene. (Sept. 18 at 8.) . . . **STREET SCENE,** a revival of Kurt Weill's 1947 classic with Langston Hughes' lyrics, based on Elmer Rice's Pulitzer Prize-winning tragedy depicting New York tenement life. The large cast includes Margaret Cusack, Sheryl Woods, Rachel Rosales, Joyce Castle, Susanne Marsee, Kevin Anderson, and William Parcher; Chris Nance. (Sept. 20 at 8.) . . . With Claudia Cummings, Sandra Moon, Michele McBride, Josepha Gayer, Bronwyn Thomas, Michael Rees Davis, and Charles Karel; Chris Nance. (Sept. 23 at 2.) . . . **TOSCA,** with Martha Thigpen, Antonio Barasorda, and Donnie Ray Albert; Louis Salemno. (Sept. 21 at 8.) . . . **MADAME BUTTERFLY,** with Catherine Lamy, Susanne Marsee, Robert Brubaker, and Carlos Serrano; Mark Gibson. (Sept. 22 at 2 and Sept. 26 at 8.) . . . **MOSES UND ARON,** the first New York staging of Schoenberg's most extensive opera (rich in twelve-tone methodology), written between 1928 and 1932. Directed by Hans Neugebauer. With Richard Cross and Thomas Young; Christopher Keene. (Sept. 22 at 8.) . . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Stephanie Friede, Cynthia Lawrence, Martin Thompson, and Carlos Serrano; Joseph Colaneri. (Sept. 25 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS

New York Philharmonic—Zubin Mehta conducting. Sept. 18 at 7:30: Mahler's Symphony No. 3, with mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar, the Westminster Symphonic Choir, and the American Boychoir. . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 8 and Sept. 21 at 11 A.M.: Mozart's "Linz" Symphony, Stravinsky's "Symphony in Three Movements," and Chopin's First Piano Concerto, with Soviet pianist Evgeny Kissin in his U.S. début. . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 8 and Sept. 25 at 7:30: Same program as above, except that Mr. Kissin will be playing Chopin's Second Piano Concerto. . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 8: Music by Barber (including "Knoxville: Summer of 1915") and Richard Strauss, with soprano Marvis Martin. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra—Richard Auldon Clark conducts works by Stravinsky, Respighi, and Otto Luening. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Sept. 18 at 8.)

Los Angeles Philharmonic—André Previn conducts the opening concert of Carnegie Hall's centennial season. The program includes Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 3 (which was played at the hall's first concert, in 1891), and two works written in 1941 (the midpoint of the hall's history): William Schuman's Third Symphony, and Barber's Violin Concerto, with Itzhak Perlman. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 26 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

Bargemusic—Ik-Hwan Bae, violin; Timothy Eddy, cello; and Kyoko Hashimoto, piano, performing chamber music by Bach, Schubert, and Stravinsky. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Sept. 20 at 7:30 and Sept. 23 at 4.)

Yale Chamber Music Series—French chamber works, including Poulenc's Oboe Sonata, with oboist Ronald Roseman; Fauré's "L'Horizon Chimérique," with baritone Richard Lalli; Debussy's "First Rhapsody," with clarinettist David Shifrin; and pieces by Ravel and Roussel. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Sept. 22 at 8:30.)

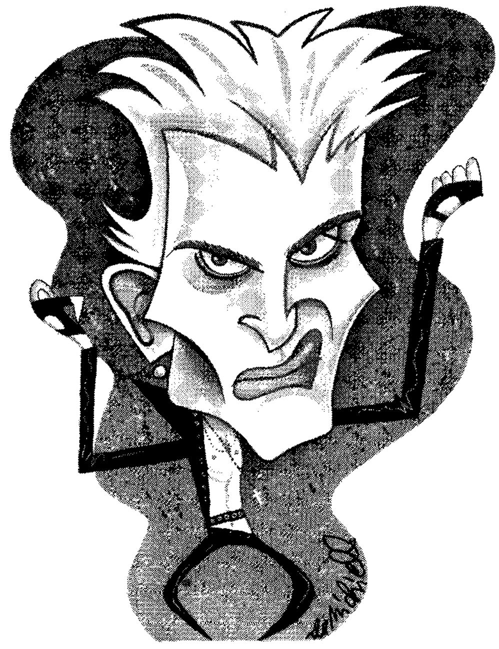
Barbara Bonney and Håkan Hagegård—A recital of solos and duets for soprano and baritone by Monteverdi, Schubert, Brahms, Sibelius, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Sept. 23 at 3.)

Christina Kiss—Piano, launches a four-year, twenty-five-concert cycle of the complete piano works of Franz Liszt. The first installment includes the "Don Juan Fantasy," the Rhapsody No. 14, and various late-period pieces. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 23 at 2.)

György Sándor—The Hungarian pianist, a specialist in the Romantic virtuosic style, plays Bach-Busoni, Mozart, Brahms, Liszt, and two works by Bartók: the composer's piano version of his "Concerto for Orchestra," and (assisted by Rodolfo Bonucci) Mr. Sándor's arrangement for violin and piano of the Solo Violin Sonata (1944). (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 23 at 3.)

Dorian Wind Quintet—In an all-Mozart concert. (Hunter College Playhouse, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Sept. 24 at 7.)

Yo-Yo Ma and Emanuel Ax—The cello-piano team plays a work they commissioned—William Bolcom's Cello Sonata (1989)—as well as Beethoven and Chopin. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Sept. 24 at 8.)



Billy Idol at the Meadowlands

Jacques Despres—Discussing Chopin's four Ballades, and playing them on a historic Erard piano. (Bösendorfer Center, 406 E. 79th St. Sept. 25 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Boston Museum Trio—Daniel Stepner (baroque violin), Laura Jeppesen (viola da gamba), and John Gibbons (harpsichord) play music by Bach, Rameau, Marais, and others. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Sept. 26 at 8.)

Dieuwke Aalbers—Soprano, with pianist Jan Slothouwer, performs Berio, Dallapiccola, Zemlinsky, Webern, and premières of works by three contemporary Dutch composers. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 26 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

The Allman Brothers Band—After seventeen years of staggering around since their last good album, this old nag of a band was on the verge of being consigned to the glue factory, but all of a sudden it's streaking down the homestretch with ferocious grace. Perhaps Duane Allman, the great slide guitarist who was killed in a motorcycle accident in 1971, finally rests in peace; whatever the reason, on their new album, "Seven Turns," the Brothers play with the energy of teenagers and the ornery wildness of veteran bluesmen, and their new slide guitarist, Warren Haynes, is hot enough and confident enough to evoke no invidious comparison with Duane. It would be well worth gambling the price of a ticket to find out if they can match their superb record, and their own early greatness, on a 1990 concert stage. (Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Sept. 24 at 8.)

Grateful Dead—Madison Square Garden. Sept. 18-20 at 7:30.

Billy Idol—With Faith No More. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Sept. 21 at 8.)

Sun Ra and Oliver Lake—The former with his Arkestra and the latter with his big band. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Sept. 21 at 8.)

Modern Jazz Quartet—92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Sept. 22 at 8.

Richard Tee Committee—Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Sept. 22 at 8.

Salsa Concert—Celia Cruz, Cheo Feliciano, José Alberto, and others. (Madison Square Garden. Sept. 22 at 8.)

New York City Gay Men's Chorus—St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Sept. 24 at 8. No tickets necessary.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Montreal Expos, Sept. 18-19 at 7:35, and Sept. 20 at 1:35.

Yankees—Vs. the Cleveland Indians, Sept. 20 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Red Sox, Sept. 21 at 7:30, and Sept. 22-23 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Baltimore Orioles, Sept. 24-26 at 7:30.

Giants—Vs. the Miami Dolphins, Sept. 23 at 1.

Jets—Vs. the Buffalo Bills, Sept. 24 at 9. (Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; and for the Jets and the Giants, Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. For information about Jets tickets, call 421-6600, and for information about Giants tickets, call 1-201 935-8111.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. The Ruffian Handicap is on Sept. 22, and the Man O'War is on Sept. 23. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights, except Sept. 24, at 7:30. The Pegasus Handicap is on Sept. 21. . . . **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1.

Regatta—Thirty-five schooners, sloops, ketches, and yawls will race for the Mayor's Cup in New York Harbor on Sept. 22, starting at 11. Battery Park offers the best dry-land viewing spot.

Mercedes Mile—The women's masters starts at 2 on Sept. 22 in front of the Metropolitan Museum and finishes at 62nd St. Other races (high-school women, high-school men, men's masters) follow, and will be capped by the women's élite mile, starting at 4, and the men's élite mile, which starts at 4:18.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Medieval Festival—A reënactment of the Goode Olde Tymes, with jousting, magicians, horse competitions, and marionettes. (The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park. Sept. 23, from noon to 6. No tickets necessary.)

Great Harlem River Cruise—A historian, an architect, and a city planner will enlighten passengers on the river's past, present, and future. (Circle Line, Pier 83, 42nd St. at the Hudson River. Sept. 26 at 6. For reservations, call 935-3960.)

Readings and Lectures—At Symphony Space: Roscoe Lee Browne, Kate Burton, Jane Curtin, James Naughton, Maria Tucci, and others will read lyric poetry of four centuries, Sept. 24 at 8. (Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ At the Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University: "American Writing from the Great Plains," with Gretel Ehrlich, Frederick Manfred, Larry Woiwode, and others reading from their own work, Sept. 24 at 8. (Washington Sq. and LaGuardia Pl. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ At Endicott Booksellers: David Lodge will read from his novel "Nice Work," Sept. 24 at 8. (450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ At the New York Public Library: Mr. Lodge will give a lecture on storytelling, Sept. 25 at 6. (Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0855.) . . . ¶ At Books & Co.: Alastair Reid will read English translations of poems by Pablo Neruda, Sept. 25 at 7:30. (939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.)

Memoranda—The Feast of San Gennaro continues through Sept. 23. . . . ¶ Rosh Hashana starts at sundown on Sept. 19. . . . ¶ The first day of fall is Sept. 23.

"If art is to nourish the roots of our culture,

society must set the artist free

to follow his vision wherever it takes him."

–President John F. Kennedy
Amherst College, October 1963

Led by Senator Jesse Helms, the U.S. Congress has applied censorship constraints on grants made by the National Endowment for the Arts, and has threatened to end all funding for this essential agency. Please, dial 1–900–230–HELP to send a telex to your congressman in support of the N.E.A.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 26.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "May Fools" (†).
Theatre 2: "After Dark, My Sweet" (directed by James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.
Theatre 3: "Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" (†).
Theatre 4: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross.
Theatre 5: "Wild at Heart" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bashu, the Little Stranger" (Bahram Beizai).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Landscape in the Mist" (Theo Angelopoulos; in Greek).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 20: "The Freshman" (†). From Sept. 21: "Narrow Margin" (Peter Hyams), with Gene Hackman and Anne Archer.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "Presumed Innocent" (†). From Sept. 21: "Funny About Love" (Leonard Nimoy), with Gene Wilder, Christine Lahti, and Mary Stuart Masterson.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 20: "My Blue Heaven" (†). From Sept. 21: "GoodFellas" (†).

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Jesus of Montreal" (directed by Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 20: "The Freshman" (†). From Sept. 21: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 2: "State of Grace" (Phil Joanou), with Sean Penn, Ed Harris, Gary Oldman, and Robin Wright.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 4: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Sept. 20: "The Two Jakes" (†). From Sept. 21: "Narrow Margin" (Peter Hyams), with Gene Hackman and Anne Archer.
Theatre 6: Through Sept. 20: "Death Warrant" (Deran Sarafian), with Jean-Claude Van Damme. From Sept. 21: "Funny About Love" (Leonard Nimoy), with Gene Wilder, Christine Lahti, and Mary Stuart Masterson.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through Sept. 20: (Separate admissions) "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†) and "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).
From Sept. 21: "The Tall Guy" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep and Shirley MacLaine.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "Death Warrant" (Deran Sarafian), with Jean-Claude Van Damme. From Sept. 21: "Funny About Love" (Leonard Nimoy), with Gene Wilder, Christine Lahti, and Mary Stuart Masterson.
Theatre 3: "State of Grace" (Phil Joanou), with Sean Penn, Ed Harris, Gary Oldman, and Robin Wright.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Presumed Innocent" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Witches" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Hardware" (Richard Stanley), with Dylan McDermott and Stacey Travis.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "My Blue Heaven" (†). From Sept. 21: "The Tall Guy" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Sound of Music" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"After Dark, My Sweet" (James Foley), with Jason Patric.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 2: "Darkman" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 20: "Mo' Better Blues" (†). From Sept. 21: "Don't Tell Her It's Me" (Malcolm Mowbray), with Steve Guttenberg.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 21: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody. From Sept. 22: "Miller's Crossing" (Joel Coen), with Gabriel Byrne, Albert Finney, Marcia Gay Harden, and John Turturro.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 18: Theatre closed. From Sept. 19: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 2: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 18: "Bye Bye Blues" (Anne Wheeler), with Rebecca Jenkins. From Sept. 19: "Interrogation" (Richard Bugajski, in Polish).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 20: "Air America" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey, Jr. From Sept. 21: "Narrow Margin" (Peter Hyams), with Gene Hackman and Anne Archer.
Theatre 2: "The Freshman" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep and Shirley MacLaine.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "State of Grace" (Phil Joanou), with Sean Penn, Ed Harris, Gary Oldman, and Robin Wright.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "Death Warrant" (Deran Sarafian), with Jean-Claude Van Damme. From Sept. 21: "Funny About Love" (Leonard Nimoy), with Gene Wilder, Christine Lahti, and Mary Stuart Masterson.

Christian Slater in "Pump Up the Volume"

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"White Hunter, Black Heart" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood, Jeff Fahey, George Dzundza, and Alun Armstrong.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Ghost" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through Sept. 20: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.
From Sept. 21: "Funny About Love" (Leonard Nimoy), with Gene Wilder, Christine Lahti, and Mary Stuart Masterson.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Darkman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hardware" (Richard Stanley), with Dylan McDermott and Stacey Travis.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 20: "Death Warrant" (Deran Sarafian), with Jean-Claude Van Damme. From Sept. 21: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 2: "Presumed Innocent" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 25: "The Camp at Thiaroye" (1988, directed by Ousmane Sembène and Thierno Faty Sow; in French). From Sept. 26: "Berkeley in the Sixties" (Mark Kitchell), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Solaris" (1976, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Hardware" (Richard Stanley), with Dylan McDermott and Stacey Travis.
Theatre 2: "Darkman" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"White Hunter, Black Heart" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood, Jeff Fahey, George Dzundza, and Alun Armstrong.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep, Shirley MacLaine, Dennis Quaid, Gene Hackman, and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 2: "Ghost" (†).

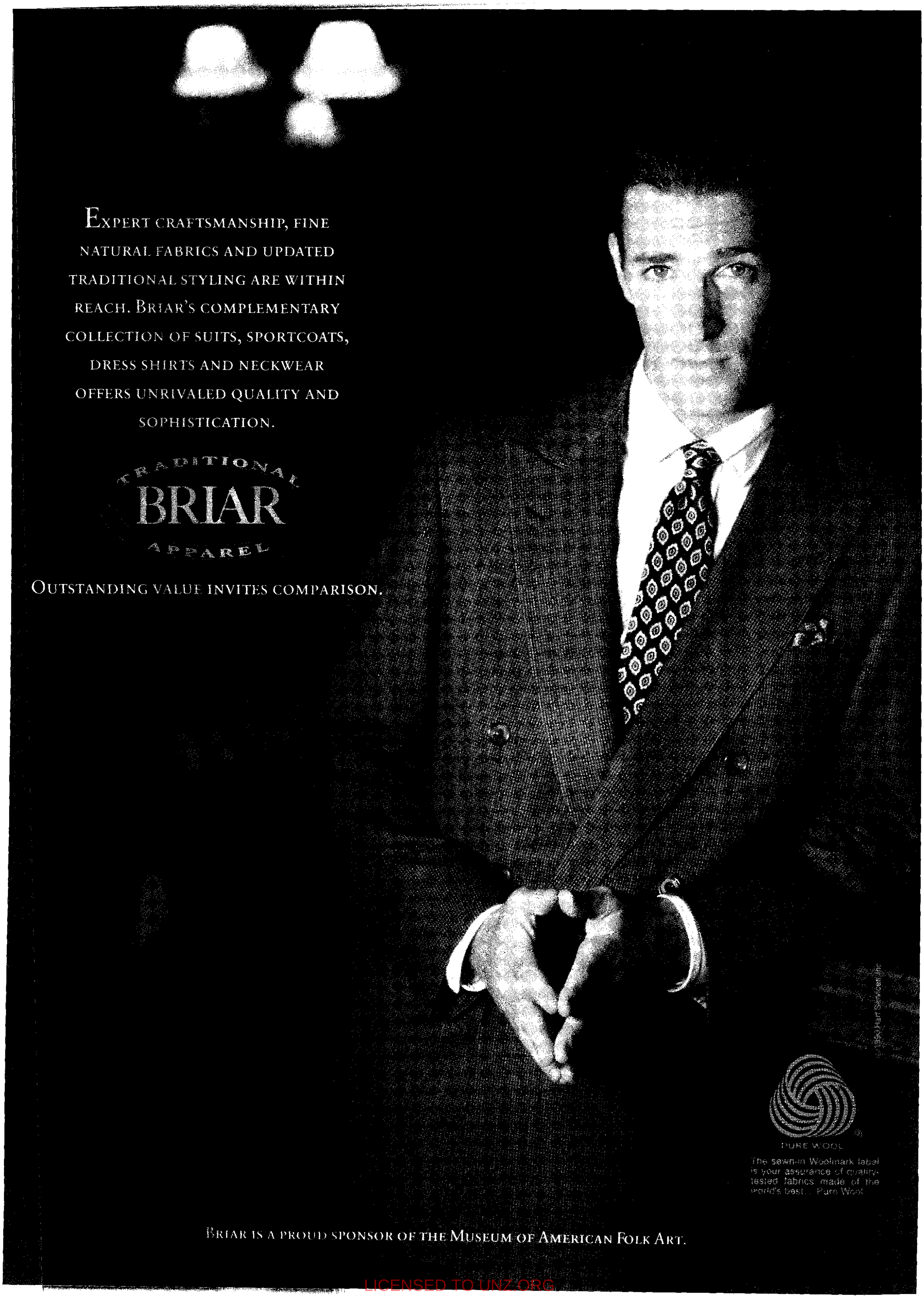
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "The Witches" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bye Bye Blues" (Anne Wheeler), with Rebecca Jenkins.
Theatre 3: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 4: "Grim Prairie Tales" (Wayne Coe), with James Earl Jones and Brad Dourif.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "After Dark, My Sweet" (James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "Mo' Better Blues" (†). From Sept. 21: "Don't Tell Her It's Me" (Malcolm Mowbray), with Steve Guttenberg, Jami Gertz, Shelley Long, and Kyle MacLachlan.
Theatre 3: "Hardware" (Richard Stanley), with Dylan McDermott and Stacey Travis.
Theatre 4: "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep and Shirley MacLaine.
Theatre 5: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.
Theatre 6: "Life Is Cheap . . . But Toilet Paper Is Expensive" (Wayne Wang).
Theatre 7: "Postcards from the Edge."
Theatre 8: "Wild at Heart" (†).
Theatre 9: "Darkman" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Lemon Sisters" (Joyce Chopra), with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Kathryn Grody.
Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "The Witches" (†); and "Men at Work" (Emilio Estevez), with Charlie Sheen and Estevez.
Theatre 3: "My Blue Heaven" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Pretty Woman" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Hardware" (Richard Stanley), with Dylan McDermott and Stacey Travis.
Theatre 2: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 20: "The Freshman" (†). From Sept. 21: "Don't Tell Her It's Me" (Malcolm Mowbray), with Steve Guttenberg, Jami Gertz, Shelley Long, and Kyle MacLachlan.



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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Theatre 4: "Wild at Heart" (†).

Theatre 5: "Darkman" (†).

Theatre 6: "After Dark, My Sweet" (James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep and Shirley MacLaine.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"State of Grace" (Phil Joanou), with Sean Penn, Ed Harris, Gary Oldman, and Robin Wright.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Fools of Fortune" (Pat O'Connor), with Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, Iain Glen, and Julie Christie.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"The Unbelievable Truth" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Metropolitan" (Whit Stillman).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Wild at Heart" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Ghost" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Wild at Heart" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "The Icicle Thief" (Maurizio Nichetti; in Italian), with Nichetti.

Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.

Theatre 3: "Life and Nothing But" (Bertrand Tavernier; in French), with Philippe Noiret, Sabine Azema, and Pascale Vignal.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep and Shirley MacLaine.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "State of Grace" (Phil Joanou), with Sean Penn, Ed Harris, Gary Oldman, and Robin Wright.

Theatre 2: "White Hunter, Black Heart" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood, Jeff Fahey, George Dzundza, Alun Armstrong, and Marisa Berenson.

Theatre 3: Through Sept. 20: "Death Warrant" (Deran Sarafian), with Jean-Claude Van Damme. From Sept. 21: "Narrow Margin" (Peter Hyams), with Gene Hackman and Anne Archer.

Theatre 4: "Hardware" (Richard Stanley), with Dylan McDermott and Stacey Travis.

Theatre 5: Through Sept. 20: "Presumed Innocent" (†). From Sept. 21: "GoodFellas" (†).

Theatre 6: Through Sept. 20: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Scott Paulin, Ellen Greene, Mimi Kennedy, and Annie Ross. From Sept. 21: "Funny About Love" (Leonard Nimoy), with Gene Wilder, Christine Lahti, and Mary Stuart Masterson.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 20: "Mo' Better Blues" (†). From Sept. 21: "Don't Tell Her It's Me" (Malcolm Mowbray), with Steve Guttenberg, Jami Gertz, Shelley Long, and Kyle MacLachlan.

Theatre 2: "The Witches" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Darkman" (†).

Theatre 2: "Flatliners" (Joel Schumacher), with Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Kevin Bacon, William Baldwin, and Oliver Platt.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 20: "Def by Temptation" (directed by James Bond III). From Sept. 21: "GoodFellas" (†).

Theatre 2: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Sept. 20: "Total Recall" (†). From Sept. 21: "Narrow Margin" (Peter Hyams), with Gene Hackman and Anne Archer.

Theatre 4: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis.

Theatre 5: "Presumed Innocent" (†).

Theatre 6: "Problem Child" (Dennis Dugan), with John Ritter.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"State of Grace" (Phil Joanou), with Sean Penn, Ed Harris, Gary Oldman, and Robin Wright.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 20: "Taking Care of Business" (Arthur Hiller), with James Belushi. From Sept. 21: "Funny About Love" (Leonard Nimoy), with Gene Wilder, Christine Lahti, and Mary Stuart Masterson.

Theatre 2: "Delta Force 2" (Aaron Norris), with Chuck Norris.

Theatre 3: "Delta Force 2."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Death Warrant" (Deran Sarafian), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Hardware" (Richard Stanley), with Dylan McDermott and Stacey Travis.

Theatre 2: "Darkman" (†).

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "My Blue Heaven" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Witches" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Sept. 17: "A Date with Judy" (1948, directed by Richard Thorpe), with Jane Powell, Wallace Beery, Elizabeth Taylor, and Robert Stack; and "Two Weeks with Love" (1950, Roy Rowland), with Powell, Ricardo Montalban, Debbie Reynolds, Charleton Carpenter, Louis Calhern, and Ann Harding.

Sept. 18-19: "Step Lively" (1944, Tim Whelan), with Gloria De Haven and Frank Sinatra; and "Riding High" (1950, Frank Capra), with Bing Crosby, Coleen Gray, Charles Bickford, William Demarest, and Oliver Hardy.

Sept. 20-22: "Hit the Deck" (1955, Roy Rowland), with Jane Powell, Tony Martin, Debbie Reynolds, Walter Pidgeon, Vic Damone, Russ Tamblyn, and Ann Miller; and "High Society" (1956, Charles Walters), with Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly, Frank Sinatra, and Celeste Holm.

Sept. 23-24: "State Fair" (†) and "Calamity Jane" (†).

Sept. 25-26: "Free and Easy" (1930, Edward Sedgwick), with Buster Keaton, Anita Page, Robert Montgomery, and Trixie Friganza; and "Whoopee" (1930, Thornton Freeland), with Eddie Cantor.

"The Spy Who Came In from the Cold" (playing September 21-22 at Theatre 80 St. Marks) is one espionage movie that neither comes on like gangbusters nor sneaks up on you like a cat thief. Instead, it creates an atmosphere of duplicity and melancholy that settles into a viewer's brain and bones. In its own subdued, contemplative fashion, Martin Ritt's 1965 movie version of John le Carré's first great best-seller packs a wallop. Three of its key talents—Richard Burton, Claire Bloom, and the cinematographer Oswald Morris—previously worked together on the initial angry-young-man movie, "Look Back in Anger"; this is an angry-middle-aged-spy movie.

As the British agent Alec Leamas, Burton manages to turn self-loathing and bitterness into something forceful and intriguing. When Leamas impersonates a drunken has-been in order to spring a trap on an East German opponent, it's hard to know where the put-on ends. Burton uses his stout body and bagged eyes to create a multihued miasma. He's matched by Cyril Cusack, who, as Leamas's boss, "Control," gives every intake of air a hidden meaning; by Oskar Werner, who brings refreshing jauntiness to the role of an East German Jewish intelligence officer; and by Bloom, who exudes both naïveté and sensuality as Leamas's Communist lover.

With the help of Morris's keenly modulated black-and-white camerawork, and the uncluttered, realistic production design (by Hal Pereira and Tambi Larsen), Ritt achieves a seedy elegance and the clarity that's essential for the intricate story's impact. What Edmund Wilson wrote about a Raymond Chandler novel applies to this movie: "It is not simply a question here of a puzzle which has been put together but of a malaise conveyed to the reader, the horror of a hidden conspiracy."

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Sept. 17: "Hail the Conquering Hero" (1944, Preston Sturges), with Eddie Bracken, Ella Raines, Freddie Steele, and William Demarest; and "The Great McGinty" (1940, Sturges), with Brian Donlevy.

Sept. 18: "The Big Pond" (1930, Hobart Henley), with Maurice Chevalier, Claudette Colbert, and George Barbier; and "Fast and Loose" (1930, Fred Newmeyer), with Carole Lombard, Miriam Hopkins, Frank Morgan, and Ilka Chase.

Sept. 19-20: "Strictly Dishonorable" (1931, John M. Stahl), with Paul Lukas, Sidney Fox, and Lewis Stone; and "Child of Manhattan" (1933, Edward Buzzell), with Nancy Carroll.

Sept. 21-24: "The Palm Beach Story" (†) and "Christmas in July" (†).

Sept. 25-26: "The Power and the Glory" (†); and "Diamond Jim" (1935, Edward Sutherland), with Edward Arnold, Binnie Barnes, and Jean Arthur.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Sept. 17: "Hour of the Wolf" (1968, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow and Liv Ullmann; and "The Passion of Anna" (1970, Bergman; in Swedish), with Ullmann, Bibi Anderson, von Sydow, and Erland Josephson.

Sept. 18: "It Should Happen to You" (1954, George Cukor), with Judy Holliday, Peter Lawford, and Jack Lemmon; and "The Whole Town's Talking" (1935, John Ford), with Jean Arthur and Edward G. Robinson.

Sept. 19: "China Seas" (1935, Tay Garnett), with Jean Harlow, Rosalind Russell, and Clark Gable; and "Riffraff" (1935, J. Walter Ruben), with Harlow, Spencer Tracy, and Joseph Calleia.

Sept. 20: "Dr. No" (1963, Terence Young) and "Thunderball" (1965, Young), both with Sean Connery as James Bond.

Sept. 21-22: "The Man Who Never Was" (1956, Ronald Neame), with Clifton Webb, Gloria Grahame, and Robert Flemyng; and "The Spy Who Came In from the Cold" (see blurb at left).

Sept. 23: "Women in Love" (1970, Ken Russell), with Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, Glenda Jackson, and Jennie Linden; and "Sons and Lovers" (1960, Jack Cardiff), with Trevor Howard, Dean Stockwell, Wendy Hiller, Mary Ure, and Heather Sears.

Sept. 24: "Woman in the Dunes" (1964, Hiroshi Teshigahara; in Japanese), with Eiji Okada; and "The Face of Another" (1966, Teshigahara), with Tatsuya Nakadai and Okada.

Sept. 25: "Nickelodeon" (†); and "Jeanne Eagels" (1957, George Sidney), with Kim Novak, Jeff Chandler, Agnes Moorehead, and Charles Drake.

Sept. 26: "The Scarlet Empress" (†) and "The Devil Is a Woman" (†).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Sept. 17 at 2:30: "Smooth Talk" (1985, directed by Joyce Chopra), with Laura Dern, Treat Williams, and Mary Kay Place. . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 6: "Stand and Deliver" (1987, Ramon Menendez), with Edward James Olmos and Lou Diamond Phillips. . . ¶ Sept. 18 at 2:30: "El Norte" (1984, Gregory Nava), with David Villalpando. . . . ¶ Sept. 18 at 6: "The Wash" (1988, Michael Toshiyuki Uno), with

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Nobu McCarthy and Mako. . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 2:30: "Eat a Bowl of Tea" (1989, Wayne Wang), with Victor Wong. . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 6: "El Norte." . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 2:30: "Waiting for the Moon" (1987, Jill Godmillow), with Linda Hunt, Linda Bassett, and Bernadette Lafont. . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 6: "The Thin Blue Line" (1988, Errol Morris), a documentary. . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at noon: "Waiting for the Moon." . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 2:30: "The Thin Blue Line." . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 5: "Longtime Companion" (1990, Norman René), with Bruce Davison, Campbell Scott, Stephen Caffrey, and Mark Lamos. . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at noon: "Susan Lenox: Her Fall and Rise" (1931, Robert Z. Leonard), with Greta Garbo, Clark Gable, and Jean Hersholt. . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 2:30: "Camille" (1936, George Cukor), with Greta Garbo, Robert Taylor, and Lionel Barrymore. . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 5: "Ninotchka" (1939, Ernst Lubitsch), with Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, Ina Claire, and Bela Lugosi. . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 2:30: "The Kiss" (1929, Jacques Feyder; silent), with Greta Garbo, Conrad Nagel, and Lew Ayres. . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 6: "Flesh and the Devil" (1926, Clarence Brown; silent), with Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, and Lars Hanson. . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 3: "Ninotchka." . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 6: "Camille."

NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL—The first programs in a seventeen-day series of international films—At **ALICE TULLY HALL:** Sept. 21 at 7:30: "Miller's Crossing" (Joel Coen, United States) . . . **AVERY FISHER HALL:** Sept. 21 at 9: "Miller's Crossing." . . . **ALICE TULLY HALL:** Sept. 22 at 2: "Freeze-Die-Come to Life" (Vitaly Kanevski, U.S.S.R.) . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 5: "L'Atalante" (Jean Vigo; 1934, France). . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 7:15: "Ju Dou" (Zhang Yimou, People's Republic). . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 9:30 and Sept. 23 at 1:30: "The King of New York" (Abel Ferrara, United States/Italy). . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 4:15: "Doctor Petiot" (Christian de Chalonge, France). . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 7:15: "Freeze-Die-Come to Life." . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 9:45: "Ju Dou." . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 6:15: "Doctor Petiot." . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 9:30 and Sept. 25 at 6:15: "Tilai" (Idrissa Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso). . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 8:30: "A Tale of Springtime" (Eric Rohmer, France). . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 6:15: "Privilege" (Yvonne Rainer, United States). . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 9:15: "No, Or the Vain Glory of Command" (Manoel de Oliveira, Portugal). (For tickets, call 362-1911.)

MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," dramas shown on television over the past thirty years. Sept. 18-22: Paul Gallico's "Verna: USO Girl" (1978, PBS), with Sissy Spacek, William Hurt, and Howard Da Silva. . . . From Sept. 25: Horton Foote's "Travelling Lady" (1957, CBS), with Kim Stanley and Robert Loggia. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1. . . . ¶ "The Reiner Moritz Collection." Sept. 18-22: "Making the Mahabharata" (1989), a documentary. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2 . . . . Sept. 18-22: "The Origin of Music" (1988, Jeremy Marre). Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 3:15. . . . From Sept. 25: "Peter Brook" (1989, David Thomas), a documentary. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Courthouse Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. Sept. 17-26 at 7: "How to Be Louise" (1989, Anne Flournoy); and "Moona Luna" (1990, Emily Breer). . . . ¶ Sept. 19-23 at 9: "Tales from the Winnipeg Film Group," a program of six short films. . . . ¶ Sept. 19 at 7: A program of short films by Marie Menken. . . . ¶ Sept. 19 at 9: "The Great Blondino" (1967) and "Bleu Shut" (1970), both by Ralph Nelson. . . . ¶ Sept. 20-23 and 26 at 9 and Sept. 24-25 at 7: "Permanent Vacation" (1980, Jim Jarmusch). . . . ¶ Sept. 20, 22, and 23 at 7: "The Wild Angels" (1966, Roger Corman), with Peter Fonda, Nancy Sinatra, Bruce Dern, Diane Ladd, Michael J. Pollard, and Peter Bogdanovich. . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 7 and Sept. 22 at 10:30: "Satan's Sadists" (1969, Al Adamson), with Russ Tamblyn and Regina Carrol. . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 7: "I Was Born . . . But" (1932, Yasujiro Ozu, in Japanese). . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 9: "The Adventures of the Exquisite Corpse, Part I" (1967, Andrew Noren) and "Chumlum" (1964, Ron Rice).

DONNELL LIBRARY CENTER, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Sept. 17 at noon: "Sambizanga" (1972, Sarah Maldoror; from Angola, in Portuguese). . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 6: "Faces of Women" (1985, Desiré Ecaré; from the Ivory Coast, in Baoulé, Jula, Bété, and French). . . . ¶ Sept. 18 at 6: "Ouaga, African Cinema Now!" (1988, Kwate Nee-Owoo and Kwesi Owusu), a documentary. . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at noon: "Harvest: 3000 Years" (1975, Haile Gerima; from Ethiopia, in Amharic). . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 2:30: "Xala" (1974, Ousmane Sembène; from Senegal, in Wolof and French). . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 6: A program of short films from southern Africa. . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at noon: "Ye'elen" (1987, Souleymane Cissé; from Mali, in Bambara). . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 6: "Sambizanga" (1972, Sarah Maldoror; from Angola, in Portuguese). . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 6: "Yaaba" (1989, Idrissa Oudraogo; from Burkina Faso, in Mooré).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

AKIRA KUROSAWA'S DREAMS—Not one of its eight segments feels like a real dream. The kind of power that Kurosawa aims for, and intermittently achieves, in this picture is less oneiric than ceremonial. The film is a succession of sweeping dramatic gestures and lofty incantations performed in an atmosphere of hushed solemnity. The second half of "Dreams" is weak: the fifth episode, "Crows," about a fantasy encounter with van Gogh, is a thin conceit; and the remaining three segments are all static, self-conscious, and didactic. But there's greatness in the film's first hour. The opening segment, "Sunshine Through the Rain," is the vision of a small child who wanders into a forest and witnesses a wedding procession of foxes; the sequence has a wholly original sense of the rapturous fear and awe we feel when we first come upon the wonders of the natural world. The second episode, "The Peach Orchard," is also lovely (though its mood and pace are too similar to those of the first). The third segment, "The Blizzard," about four men trapped in a snowstorm, is all snow, howling-wind effects, and bleak, undifferentiated vistas of despair, until Kurosawa pulls a miracle out of the white void; a woman in long black hair and diaphanous robes appears to the party's leader as he battles sleep. It's a transcendent image, perhaps the most piercing ever made of the desires that keep people from surrendering to death. And the fourth episode, "The Tunnel," about a man returning from war and encountering his dead comrades, is a brilliant, hypnotic piece of filmmaking. Its images are simple, stark, and resonant, its dramatic shape is lucid and classically satisfying, and its rhythm is overwhelming, unstoppable; it moves with a sorrowful marching pace, the rhythm of grief. With Akira Terao, who plays the dreamer in six of the segments; Mieko Harada as the Snow Fairy; Martin Scorsese as van Gogh; and Chishu Ryu. Cinematography by Takao Saito and Masaharu Ueda. In Japanese.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/10/90.) (Angelika Film Center, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

"Miller's Crossing" filmmakers Ethan and Joel Coen

CALAMITY JANE (1953)—Doris Day is at her friendliest and most likable as the tomboy heroine of this big, bouncy Western musical about Jane's romance with Wild Bill Hickok (easygoing Howard Keel). The script, by James O'Hanlon, is ingenious (until the last fifteen minutes or so); the framework allows for some singing and dancing by the charming Allyn McLerie, and a good drag act. The score, by Sammy Fain and Paul Francis Webster, is just fine, except that Day's main ballad, "Secret Love" (or at least the way it's staged), is out of character and doesn't seem to belong in the film. Directed by David Butler. With Phil Carey, Dick Wesson, Paul Harvey, Chubby Johnson, and Gale Robbins. —P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 23-24.)

CHRISTMAS IN JULY (1940)—Preston Sturges wrote and directed this little slapstick romance when he was just warming up as a director. Dick Powell and Ellen Drew are the young couple whose luck turns when he thinks he has won $25,000 in a slogan contest. It's agreeable enough—it's rather sweet, actually—but it lacks the full-fledged Sturges lunacy.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 21-24.)

THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE & HER LOVER—A movie about a crude British thug, Albert Spica (Michael Gambon), whose favorite method of terrorizing people is ramming things down their throats. Albert himself eats only haute cuisine; he and his wife (Helen Mirren) dine every night at a posh restaurant called Le Hollandais. This is an Art Movie, refined and terribly formal; the director, Peter Greenaway (who also wrote the script), places this barbarian smack in the middle of "painterly" compositions and encourages us to see him as a steaming hunk of offal desecrating the beauty of an artist's creation. He looks at Albert with the disdainful stare that the pukka sahib directs at a servant who has inconvenienced him. Greenaway, however, has a lot more in common with his loutish protagonist than he thinks. He obviously regards himself as an aesthetic virtuoso, but he's just a cultural omnivore. (He chews with his mouth open—we can identify almost every piece of art that has fed his imagination.) The only thing in this movie's tidy, hermetic universe that Greenaway is unable to control, or disguise with fancy brushwork, is his loathing of the body. The movie features several gross-out scenes, including a climactic act of cannibalism; the Motion Picture Association of America gave it an X rating. (The distributors released it unrated.) What's offensive about the picture, though, isn't its violence or its visceral shocks but the patrician arrogance, the smug aestheticism, the snobbishness that suffuse every frame. Greenaway is an intellectual bully: he pushes us to the ground and kicks art in our faces. Also with Alan Howard (the Lover) and Richard Bohringer (the Cook).—T.R. (5/7/90) (Gramercy; through Sept. 20.)

DARKMAN—A comic-book movie made with real conviction. The director, Sam Raimi, works from inside the cheerfully violent adolescent-male sensibility of superhero comics, as if there were no higher style for a filmmaker to aspire to, and the absence of condescension is refreshing. The film's graphic style is all bright colors, high contrast, and skewed angles; its narrative style is breathlessly speedy; its emotions are basic (mostly greed

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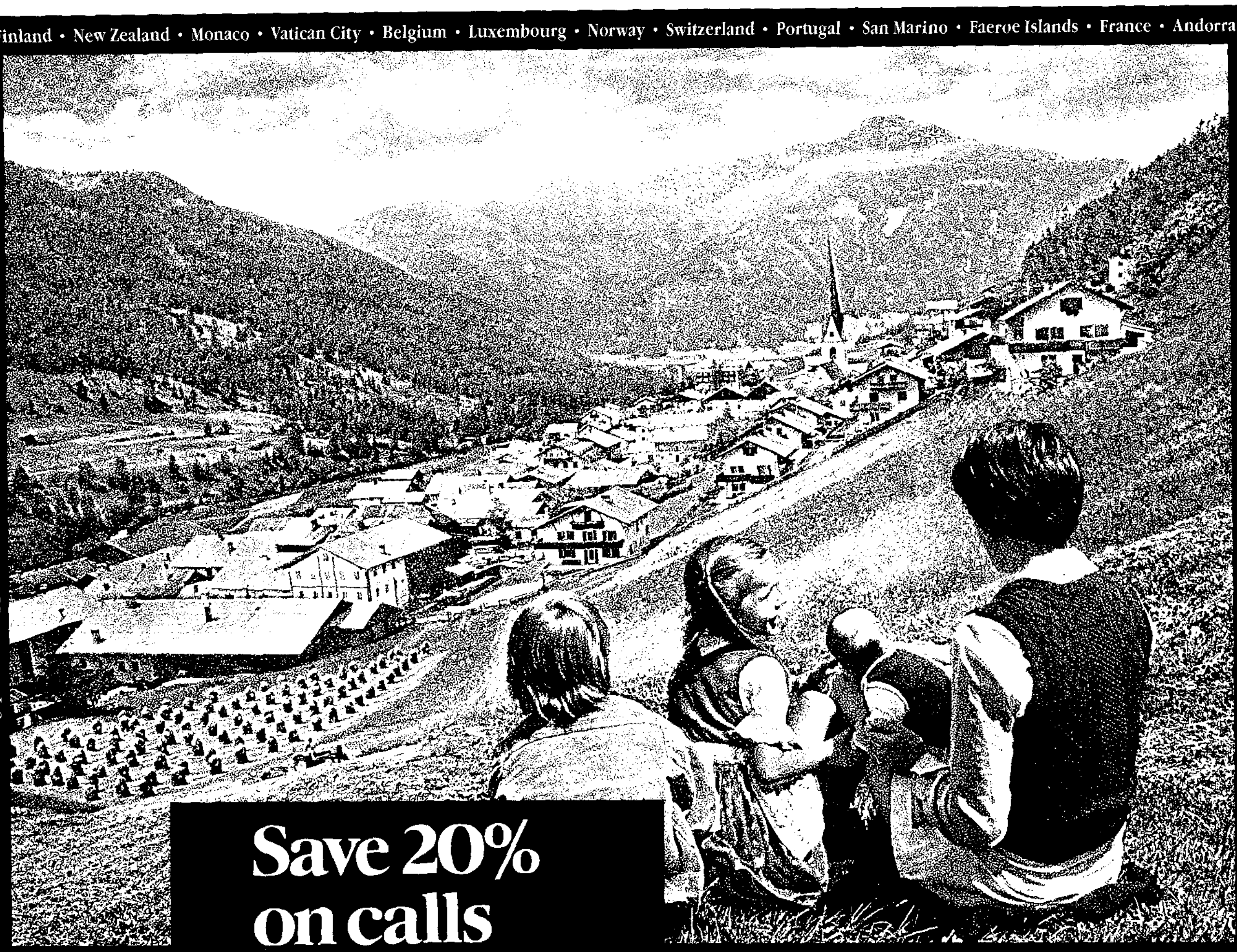

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and revenge); and its dialogue is so crude and punchy that you can practically see the exclamation point. The title character, played by Liam Neeson, is a worthy addition to the tradition of angelic-demonic avengers. Yet the picture isn't quite satisfying. Raimi has some terrific visual ideas, but his skills as a director are rather primitive. He doesn't have the technique to match his imagination, and frequently you find yourself responding to the idea of a sequence rather than to the experience of it on the screen. The images and ideas in "Darkman" don't flow, don't carry us along with them, in the way a real filmmaker's would. Raimi has made a first-rate comic book without having made a genuinely exciting movie. Also with Frances McDormand, Larry Drake, and Colin Friels. The screenplay is by Chuck Pfarrer, Sam Raimi, Ivan Raimi, Daniel Goldin, and Joshua Goldin, from a story by the director. —T.R. (9/10/90) (Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Olympia, and National Twin.)

The Devil Is a Woman (1935)—Directed by Josef von Sternberg and starring Marlene Dietrich, this is the most famous version of "La Femme et la Pantin," Pierre Louÿs's short novel about a femme fatale, published in 1898. It was filmed earlier with Geraldine Farrar (1920) and with Conchita Montenegro (1929), and after the von Sternberg movie it was filmed in 1958, by Julien Duvivier, under the title "A Woman Like Satan," starring Brigitte Bardot, and then in 1977 by Buñuel, as "That Obscure Object of Desire," with two actresses playing the leading role. It's a story of obsessive love, and von Sternberg's version is certainly obsessive. There's a slightly crazy daringness about his approach to the mythic. (You're never invited into the heroine's state of mind.) The film's near-abstract decorative quality has the fascination of a folly. With Lionel Atwill, Cesar Romero, Alison Skipworth, Edward Everett Horton, Don Alvarado, Hank Mann, and Edwin Maxwell. Von Sternberg was credited as both director and photographer, with Lucien Ballard as assistant photographer; John Dos Passos and S. K. Winston were the scenarists; Hans Dreier was the art director.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 26.)

The Freshman—This comedy, written and directed by Andrew Bergman, wears its zaniness on its sleeve. The hero, Clark (Matthew Broderick), is a quiet young man from Vermont who has just entered the N.Y.U. film school. Within a few days of arriving in New York, he's making deliveries for an "importer" named Carmine Sabatini (Marlon Brando) and being treated like a member of Sabatini's family (or Family): Carmine's daughter (Penelope Ann Miller) has told her father that she wants to marry Clark, and the old man embraces him, with alarming enthusiasm, as "the son I never had." The movie is overinsistent and very erratic. When Bergman's jokes are good, they're sensational; when they're not so good, he repeats them again and again, as if they'd become funnier through familiarity. In this picture he has actors who play his sort of material to perfection. Miller and Bruno Kirby, as Carmine's fast-talking weaselly nephew, are hilariously unfazed by the family's criminal activities, and Broderick calibrates his reactions with remarkable comic dexterity. And Brando seems to be in a bizarre and wonderful world of his own. People in the movie keep staring at him and commenting on his resemblance to Don Corleone, and he plays along, parodying himself marvellously. In his scenes the movie seems less frantic; its lunacy takes on an air of serenity—a deeper, more inexplicable, and much funnier weirdness. Also with Paul Benedict, Maximilian Schell, B. D. Wong, and Bert Parks (belting out "Tequila" and Dylan's sardonic "Maggie's Farm" at a formal dinner).—T.R. (7/30/90) (Gemini. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, and Worldwide Cinemas; through Sept. 20.)

Ghost—It sounds like a horror movie, but it's a romantic fairy tale. The scariest thing about it is its shamelessness. A young New York bank executive, Sam (Patrick Swayze), is killed, on the street, at a moment in his life when everything seems to be going his way. After his death, Sam sticks around, as a spirit (and Swayze stays on screen, as a body). He attends his funeral; watches his beautiful girlfriend, Molly (Demi Moore), drift grief-stricken through the spectacular loft they had just moved into; and then devotes himself to protecting her from the people who killed him. Through a reluctant psychic (Whoopi Goldberg), he tries to communicate with Molly; later, an experienced ghost (Vincent Schiavelli) teaches him how to move objects and break stuff. In this movie, death is treated as if it were merely a form of disability, one of those handicaps we've seen people struggle bravely with in TV movies—something for the individual to triumph over, with will power, hard work, and love. This creamy-toned fantasy, directed by Jerry Zucker from a screenplay by Bruce Joel Rubin, certainly pushes the audience's emotional buttons. It's a twentysomething hybrid of "It's a Wonderful Life" and some of the goofier, more solemn episodes of "The Twilight Zone," and there's not a trace of wit or irony in it. Its images of death have a soothing banality, like a greeting-card message from the world beyond. Also with Tony Goldwyn and Rick Aviles.—T.R. (7/30/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Art Greenwich Twin, and Loews Paramount.)

GoodFellas—With Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta, Joe Pesci, Lorraine Bracco, and Paul Sorvino; directed by Martin Scorsese. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cinema I; starting Sept. 19. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, 86th Street East Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center; starting Sept. 21.)

May Fools—Louis Malle's new film takes place in May, 1968, when, for a few chaotic weeks, French society seemed on the verge of remaking itself: students were rioting, workers were striking, and the country came to a standstill. The characters in this picture are far removed from the stirring street theatre of May, '68, but they're affected by it nonetheless. The setting is a shabby estate presided over by Milou (Michel Piccoli), a genial man in his sixties who lives the life of a lazy country sensualist: he keeps bees, browns in the sun, and gropes the housekeeper. On the sunny day when the story begins, his mother dies, and he summons the rest of the family for the funeral and the reading of the will. There's a sense that things are about to change, both on the large scale of French society and on the infinitely smaller one of Milou's life. Malle and his co-writer, Jean-Claude Carrière, use the upheaval of May, '68, very deftly: it intrudes on their comedy like distant thunder on a sunny day, but the threatened downpour of Meaning never develops—we get a cooling shower of light ironies instead. Piccoli gives one of the best performances of his long career: he's vigorous and radiantly good-humored. Although its charm sometimes feels a bit too easy, the film is enjoyable throughout. It just bounces along to the rhythm of its remarkable score, composed and played by the eighty-two-year-old jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli; the movie, like the music, has a delicate swing to it. Also with Miou-Miou and Michel Duchaussoy. In French.—T.R. (7/16/90) (Angelika Film Center.)

Mo' Better Blues—The hero of Spike Lee's film is a trumpet player named Bleek Gilliam (Denzel Washington), who is squarely in the tradition of obsessive, single-minded movie jazz musicians. Lee's script presents Bleek with a series of choices, about his love life, his artistic life, and the connections between them. The problem with the picture is that it doesn't frame the hero's choices so that we know what's at stake. And Lee doesn't seem to have thought through the role of the music. He has set the film in the present—in pointed contrast with other recent movies about jazz—but his attitude toward the music's relationship to contemporary culture is incoherent. The picture has a distracted, meandering quality. Denzel Washington's magnetism and intelligence keep the movie watchable even during its most aimless stretches, but the script doesn't allow him to shape the performance. Lee's filmmaking here is all notions and no shape: hard, fierce blowing, rather than real music. Also with Wesley Snipes, Joie Lee, Cynda Williams, Giancarlo Esposito, Dick Anthony Williams, John and Nicholas Turturro, and the late Robin Harris. Lee himself plays a comic lovable-sidekick role. The score is by Bill Lee (the director's father), and the music of Bleek's quintet is played by the Branford

Marsalis Quintet, with Terence Blanchard as the trumpet soloist.—T.R. (8/13/90) Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Baronet, Chelsea Cinemas, and Metro Cinema; through Sept. 20.)

Y BLUE HEAVEN—Steve Martin wears a flattop pompadour. You see him and you laugh, and the movie's over.—P.K. (23rd St. West Triplex, and West Side Cinema. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Sutton; through Sept. 20.)

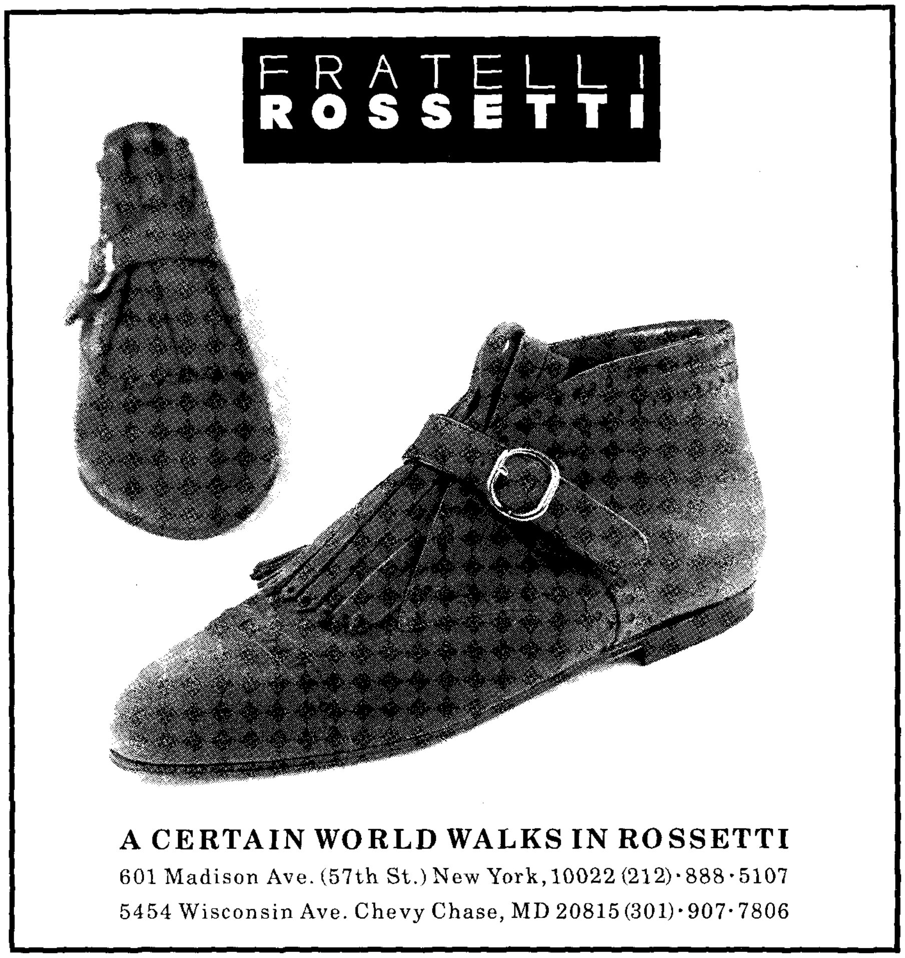
ICKELODEON (1976)—Peter Bogdanovich's slapstick homage to early fly-by-night moviemaking begins in 1910 and ends in 1915, when the director hero (Ryan O'Neal) attends the L.A. première of "The Birth of a Nation" and realizes the inadequacy of the pictures he's been churning out. It sounds promising, but Bogdanovich attempts an exercise in style, and the result is sustained clutter. It's like "Once in a Lifetime" played at the wrong speed, and it makes you feel terrible, because you realize how deeply involved the director must have been to go so blindly wrong. With Tatum O'Neal, Burt Reynolds, Jane Hitchcock, Stella Stevens, and Brian Keith. Everyone seems to be on his own. The cinematography is by Laszlo Kovacs.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 25.)

ALM BEACH STORY (1942)—One of the giddiest and most chaotic of Preston Sturges's satiric orgies. The romantic problems of the leads (Joel McCrea and Claudette Colbert) get shoved aside by the secondary characters. Colbert, travelling by train, becomes involved with a bunch of drunken millionaires —members of the "Ale and Quail Club," on board with their hounds and guns—who stage an informal skeet shoot in the club car and demolish the glassware. Sturges's comic invention soars, but the picture is too wild to be sustained; still, it's a joy, despite the lulls of waggish humor. With Mary Astor, Rudy Vallée, and the Sturges stock company, including William Demarest, Franklin Pangborn, and Jimmy Conlin.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 21-24.)

HE POWER AND THE GLORY (1933)—Preston Sturges wrote the script (which is sentimental and heavy-handed but is nevertheless almost a warmup for "Citizen Kane"), and the producer, Jesse L. Lasky, who considered it "the most perfect script" he'd ever seen, insisted that the director, William K. Howard, shoot it word for word. Spencer Tracy is the railroad tycoon who has killed himself, and the story is told from his funeral by Ralph Morgan. With Colleen Moore and slinky Helen Vinson. Cinematography by James Wong Howe.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 25-26.)

PRESUMED INNOCENT—A ponderous adaptation of Scott Turow's cunningly plotted mystery novel. The director, Alan J. Pakula, has shot and paced the movie as if it weren't a mystery but a serious character study, an art film. It's lit (by Gordon Willis) like "Cries and Whispers," only without the bright-red accents: the movie's palette seems to consist of brown and gray—earnest, business-suit colors. The lunacy of treating this story as a deep exploration of character is that the only thing we really want to know about the character in question—Rusty Sabich (Harrison Ford), a Midwestern prosecutor accused of murdering one of his colleagues (Greta Scacchi)—is: Did he do it or not? Ford, in what is probably an unplayable role, has to maintain a tense, repressed, impenetrable expression throughout. Bonnie Bedelia, as Rusty's nervous, self-deprecating wife, gives lovely shadings to a tough part. As the judge presiding over Rusty's trial, Paul Winfield supplies some sorely needed comedy. And Raul Julia, as the hero's lawyer, is an elegant, commanding presence in the courtroom scenes. Also with Brian Dennehy. Screenplay by Pakula and Frank Pierson.—T.R. (8/13/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, 34th St. East, Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Sept. 20.)

PRETTY WOMAN—The lovers in this romantic comedy, directed by Garry Marshall, are a long-legged, golden-hearted Hollywood Boulevard hooker (Julia Roberts) and a cold, suave corporate raider (Richard Gere). He buys her tasteful (expensive) clothes and shows her how to act "classy"; she opens—in order—his wallet, his fly, and his heart. The only real distinction of this long and rather uneventful diversion is the radical contrast between the stars' performing styles. Roberts



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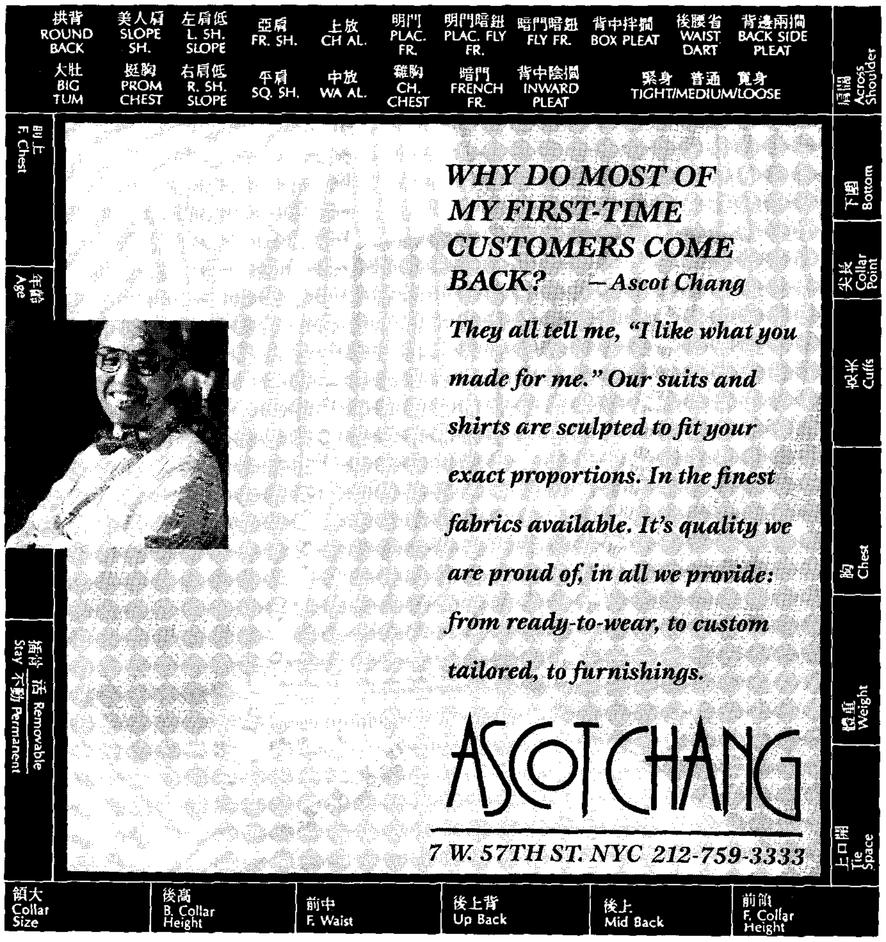

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is all ebullience and scattershot charm. The kind word for Gere's style is minimal. He's opaque, stubbornly remote; he seems to have faxed his performance in. At its worst, the movie is just unimaginative; at its best, it's pleasant and competent. It's business-as-usual entertainment. Also with Jason Alexander, Laura San Giacomo, Ralph Bellamy, and Hector Elizondo. The screenplay is by J. F. Lawton.—T.R. (Guild.)

The Scarlet Empress (1934)—Josef von Sternberg turned the story of Catherine the Great into what he himself called a "relentless excursion into style"; the décor and the visual motifs became the stars, and Marlene Dietrich was used as a camera subject instead of as a person. She's photographed behind veils and fishnets, while dwarfs slither about and bells ring and everybody tries to look degenerate. Von Sternberg had a peculiar notion that this showy pomposity proved that film was an art medium. The picture is egocentric and empty of drama, yet it has the fascination (and the tediousness) that bizarre, obsessional movies often have. Sam Jaffe, in a fright wig and smiling like a death's-head, plays mad, crippled Peter; Dietrich's daughter, Maria Sieber, appears in the opening scenes as the young Catherine; in the role of Count Alexei, John Lodge wears dashing long hair and a mustache and swaggers about in furs. With Louise Dresser, strangely folksy as the old Empress, and Jane Darwell, Gavin Gordon, C. Aubrey Smith, Olive Tell, and Edward Van Sloan. The script by Manuel Komroff was presumably based on a diary of Catherine's; the music is definitely based on Tchaikovsky and Mendelssohn.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 26.)

The Sound of Music (1965)—Set in Austria in 1938, this is a tribute to freshness that is so mechanically engineered and so shrewdly calculated that the background music rises, the already soft focus blurs and melts, and, upon the instant, you can hear all those noses blowing in the theatre. Whom could this operetta offend? Only those of us who, despite the fact that we may respond, loathe being manipulated in this way and are aware of how cheap and ready-made are the responses we are made to feel. We may become even more aware of the way we have been turned into emotional and aesthetic imbeciles when we hear ourselves humming the sickly, goody-goody songs. The dauntless scrubbed-faced heroine (Julie Andrews), in training to become a nun, is sent from the convent to serve as governess to the motherless Von Trapp children, and turns them into a happy little troupe of singers before marrying their father (Christopher Plummer). She says goodbye to the nuns and leaves them outside at the fence, as she enters the cathedral to be married. Squeezed again, and the moisture comes out of thousands—millions—of eyes and noses. Wasn't there perhaps one little Von Trapp who didn't want to sing his head off, or who screamed that he wouldn't act out little glockenspiel routines for Papa's party guests, or who got nervous and threw up if he had to get on a stage? The only thing the director, Robert Wise, couldn't smooth out was the sinister, archly decadent performance by Christopher Plummer—he of the thin, twisted smile; he seems to be in a different movie altogether. With Eleanor Parker, Richard Haydn, Peggy Wood, Anna Lee, and Marni Nixon. The music is by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II; the script, by Ernest Lehman, is based on the stage version by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse.—P.K. (Gotham Cinema.)

At the Biograph Cinema, Eddie Cantor in "Whoopee"

State Fair (1945)—Rodgers & Hammerstein take over. Cheerful is probably the word for it—if you're in the mood for cheerful. The story has lost the folk humor it had in its 1933 version, and the Americana has been poured on. Everything is too clean and bright and smily; it all reeks of manufacture, especially Charles Winninger. The principal actors trying to fake their way through are Fay Bainter, Jeanne Crain, Dana Andrews, Dick Haymes, and Vivian Blaine. Walter Lang directed. The score includes "It Might As Well Be Spring" and "It's a Grand Night for Singing." It would have been a better musical if the lyricist (Hammerstein, who also wrote the script) hadn't been fond of words like "grand."—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 23-24.)

The Tall Guy—With Jeff Goldblum, directed by Mel Smith. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gramercy, and Sutton; starting Sept. 21.)

Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!—Pedro Almodóvar's new movie gets off to a fast start, like a wind-up toy, but it runs out of momentum early, and Almodóvar can't figure out how to start it up again. The story, about a released mental patient (Antonio Banderas) who follows a sexy actress (Victoria Abril) and then takes her prisoner, seems to tie the director's wild imagination down, and his efforts to keep his (and the audience's) blood circulating betray some desperation. Neither the kidnapper's romantic obsession nor his captive's eventual love for him is especially convincing. And we don't fully enjoy the perverse humor of the situation, either: we've seen the victim subdued by a hard slap, and that image is too strong to forget. The limpness of "Tie Me Up!" suggests that Almodóvar is either a confused director or a tired one—probably a bit of both. It's as if he had made the movie solely to satisfy the public's demand for a new Almodóvar film. Also with Francisco Rabal, Loles Leon, and Lola Cardona. Screenplay by Almodóvar. In Spanish.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Gramercy; through Sept. 20.)

Total Recall—This fifty-million-dollar science-fiction thriller is full of relentless action and spectacular effects, and it's no fun at all. It's as heavy-spirited as its star, Arnold Schwarzenegger: imposing and implacable, like the killer robot Arnold played (or embodied) in "The Terminator." The script, by Ronald Shusett, Dan O'Bannon, and Gary Goldman, is based on a story by Philip K. Dick; the plot keeps twisting and turning, but we stop following it before the picture is half over. It's just a frame for meaty action sequences—a skeleton nestled deep inside ballooning muscles. The director, Paul Verhoeven ("RoboCop"), composes striking images, but they're oppressive and completely impersonal: every weird angle, every close-up of a face contorted with pain, every splash of bright-red blood is an effect borrowed from horror comics. The picture itself is a terminator: when it's over, you feel as if the life had been pounded out of you, and you never want to go to the movies again. Also with Sharon Stone, Ronny Cox, and Rachel Ticotin. Cinematography by Jost Vacano.—T.R. (6/18/90) (Criterion Center; through Sept. 20.)

The Two Jakes—Directed by and starring Jack Nicholson, this sequel to "Chinatown" (1974) begins absorbingly, with hard-edge dialogue and muffled echoes of the earlier film. Nicholson's Jake Gittes, the private detective specializing in divorce, takes on a client, Jake Berman (Harvey Keitel), a budding real-estate developer, and finds himself caught up in a murder case that somehow involves Katherine Mulwray, the daughter of Evelyn Mulwray, the Faye Dunaway character he loved in "Chinatown." But when we've got the setup clear in our heads and expect the movie to rouse itself, to develop a present tense and get going, it remains airless and murky. It proceeds phlegmatically, bringing in more and more characters and complications, and losing us. We don't get the film-noir thrill of mystery and resolution. By the time the plot comes together (more or less), we're benumbed. As the director, Nicholson doesn't give the characters any snap and he doesn't build the scenes; it's as if he were scratching his head each time the camera got turned on. As Gittes, he wears a bitter half smile and gives a groggy performance. It's a spiritless movie, dark and mannered. There are good people in the cast—Meg Tilly, Madeleine Stowe, Rubén Blades, Frederic Forrest, Eli Wallach, David Keith, Joe Mantell, Richard Farnsworth—but they're emotionally distanced from us, and they don't seem to matter. The script (though not the narration) is mostly by Robert Towne; the cinematography is by Vilmos Zsigmond.—P.K. (Loews 19th Street East 6; through Sept. 20.)

Wild at Heart—Right from the start, just about everything is wrong with David Lynch's new movie, and the wrongness has an escalating, vertiginous quality. Every false move seems to lead to another, more disastrous than the one before. It's a buzzing, hyperkinetic picture, but its wildness is all on the surface: the images are elaborately conceived, arresting, and meaningless, like tattoos. The novel by Barry Gifford on which Lynch based his screenplay is a languorous, arty trifle about a pair of lovers named Sailor (Nicolas Cage) and Lula (Laura Dern), who drive from North Carolina to Texas and stop at ratty hotels and motels along the way; they're hard-lovin' losers who smoke a lot and don't get to the place they set out for (California). Their happiness is threatened by a variety of kinky villains, mostly of Lynch's invention: Gifford's poky Deep South odyssey is now an orgy of evil, full of graphic violence and grotesque craziness. The shocks don't have much resonance, though; the weirdness here is inexpressive and trivial, even silly. And the lurid villainy always seems diversionary, a baroque disguise for a bland, lifeless, and overfamiliar story. The movie is one startling lapse of taste after another; it's a sorry spectacle. Also with Diane Ladd, Willem Dafoe, Harry Dean Stanton, Isabella Rossellini, Grace Zabriskie, J. E. Freeman, W. Morgan Sheppard, Calvin Lockhart, David Patrick Kelly, and Crispin Glover.—T.R. (8/27/90) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Cinema 3, and 62nd & Broadway.)

The Witches—The ads say "From the imagination of Jim Henson and director Nicolas Roeg." It would be more accurate to say "From the imagination of the writer Roald Dahl." This quirky fairy-tale movie is about the diabolical, gleeful evil that's hidden behind normality. (It's about women who secretly hate children.) What Henson and Roeg supply is their craftsmanship and their affection for the novel's adult, calmly macabre tone. (The movie promises to be an enduring, slightly scandalous joy.) As the Grand High Witch of the World, the black-clad Anjelica Huston lifts her arm up high in a towering salute and, addressing the witches of England at their annual meeting, held at a seacoast hotel, she outlines her plan: all the children in the land are to be turned into mice. The nine-year-old Luke (Jasen Fisher), who overhears her speech, is hunted down and transformed, but, blessed with a practical-minded Norwegian granny (Mai Zetterling) who's an expert on witches, he sets out to foil the plan. The movie doesn't have Dahl's narrative confidence, and it goes in for a little sweetening, but it has major compensations. Pale, bespectacled Luke is rather mousy to start with, and when he becomes a light-brown critter who can be cradled in his granny's hand it seems almost a fulfillment. His greedy pal Bruno (Charles Potter) seems fulfilled, too—as a blobby gray rodent. The two mice are triumphs for Henson's workshop. Zetterling is the hypnotic storytelling granny of our dreams; Huston is a gutsy, camp witch, with an accent that slips like her features; her terrified underlings—bald, drag-queen witches—are like a child's drawings of the Devil. With Bill Paterson and Brenda Blethyn as Bruno's parents, Rowan Atkinson as the hotel manager, and Jane Horrocks as Miss Irvine. The script is by Allan Scott.—P.K. (Eastside Cinema, Quad Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, Metro Cinema, and West Side Cinema.)

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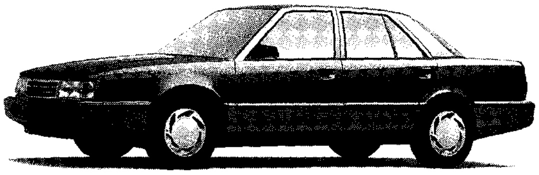

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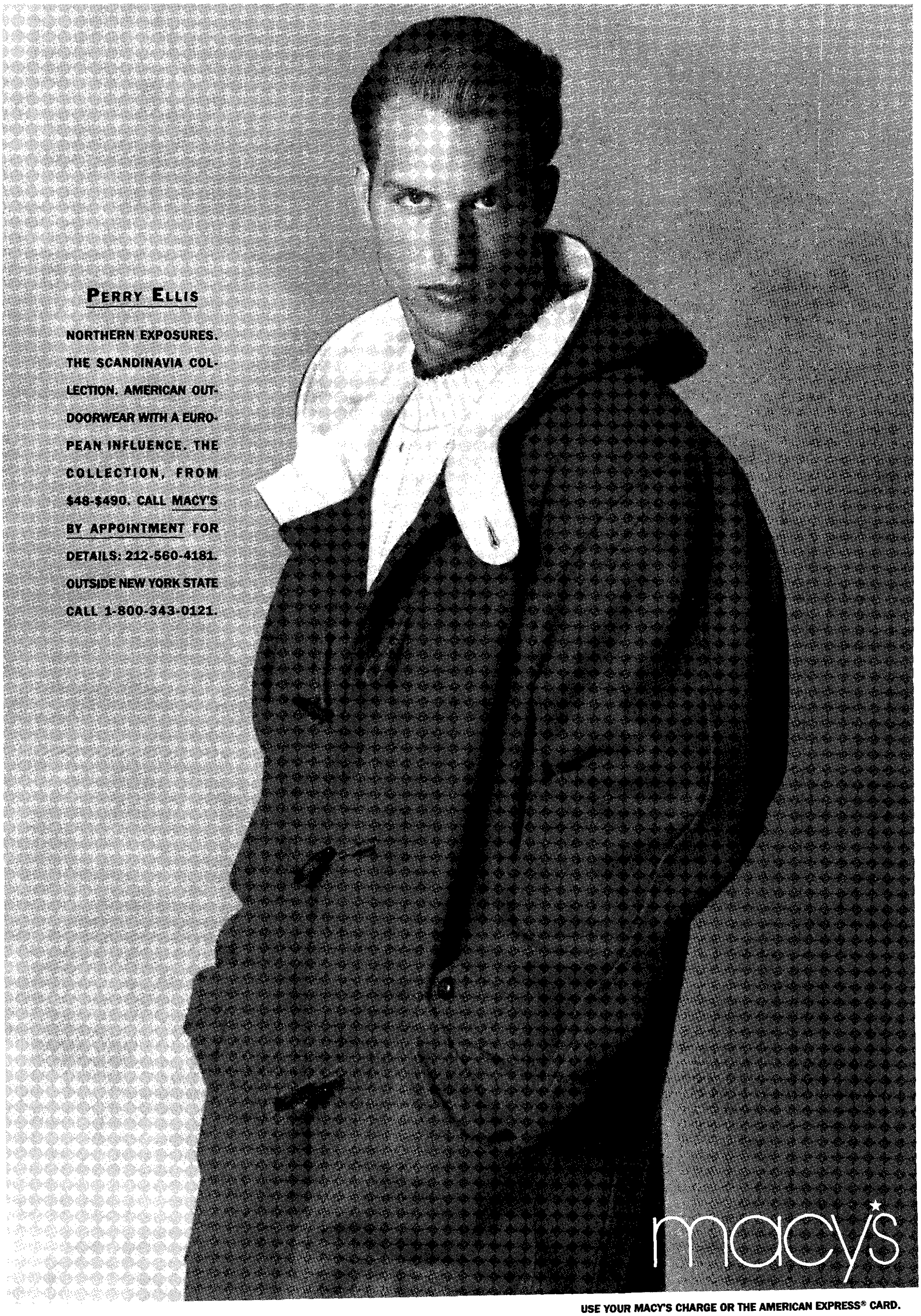

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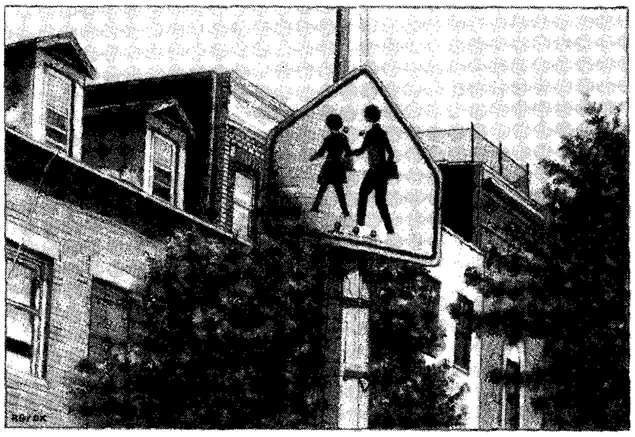
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THE great public scandals of the last decade are remarkable, above all, for their inconclusiveness, their strange resistance to closure. After the tangled plots and subplots of the HUD mess, the Iran-Contra affair, and the savings-and-loan debacle have been painstakingly worked out, after the major figures and the bit players have been catalogued and identified, the committee reports filed and the sentences handed down, it appears that hardly anything has changed. One is left feeling that, given the right circumstances and the right people in office, it could all happen again, almost exactly as it did before.

In the case of Iran-Contra, it is becoming increasingly difficult to remember what all the fuss was about. That Rear Admiral John Poindexter, President Reagan's national-security adviser, and Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, a member of his staff, were at the center of a coördinated effort to deceive Congress and contravene its laws; that they sold arms to Iran and conducted other secret operations without congressional oversight; that they funded the Nicaraguan resistance partly by soliciting funds from foreign governments—that events so threatening to the Constitution and to representative democracy ever really took place seems less and less believable. Former President Reagan, for one, has publicly professed not to believe it. Last February, in his deposition for the Poindexter trial he stated, "To this day, I don't have any information or knowledge that . . . there was a diversion." A few months after Mr. Reagan made this remarkable statement, Admiral Poindexter, convicted of lying to Congress, was sentenced to six months in prison. The year before, Colonel North, convicted of falsifying and destroying records and accepting an illegal gratuity (a security fence), had received a sentence of two years' probation, twelve hundred hours of community service, and a fine of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. (Both cases are now being appealed.)



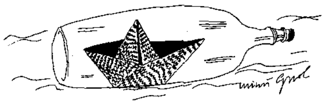
The immediate party affronted, of course, was Congress: not only did the Reagan Administration officials deceive Congress and break its laws but, more ominously, they successfully circumvented its most important power—that of the purse. And yet if the aftermath of Iran-Contra seems inconclusive, it is Congress that must shoulder most of the blame. Only Congress had the resources and the authority to carry on a comprehensive investigation of the affair, and to consider the constitutional issues it raised. But the televised hearings in the summer of 1987 showed a Congress that was still divided over the Contras, was reluctant to press the Administration to make available crucial documents (many of which remain classified to this day), and, in general, seemed afraid to challenge a popular President on a matter that, if pursued to its conclusion, might lead to the voting of articles of impeachment. By the time the investigation was turned over to the independent prosecutor, the grave constitutional issues raised by Iran-Contra had been reduced to questions like whether or not Oliver North paid for his security fence—that is, to questions about the scattered, petty doings of a handful of overzealous Presidential aides.

The savings-and-loan affair is likewise being ascribed to a few dishonest, greedy people. Before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait provided a useful diversion, politicians were scrambling to pin the blame for the S. & L. problem on the other side: Democrats complained of political favoritism and "insider access" (a code word for "Republicans") and pointed to the alleged improprieties of Neil Bush, the President's son; Republicans criticized influence-buying and "special interests" (a code word for "Democrats"), and pointed to the fallen Speaker of the House, Jim Wright. In the meantime, some members of Congress were returning contributions they had received from savings-and-loans—institutions that, collectively, have made political contributions of more than ten million dollars over the last decade. But giving back campaign contributions doesn't address the causes of the savings-and-loan crisis, and all the finger pointing of the Democrats and the Republicans obscures the fact that the laws that made it possible for the savings-and-loans to lose hundreds of billions of dollars of their depositors' money were written and passed by a Democratic Congress, with strong support from members of both parties, and signed by a Republican

President. All the talk of crime and fraud and "S. & L. kingpins" obscures the fact that most of the money lost in the scandal was lost by savings-and-loan directors who acted well within those laws. And all the talk of "special interests" obscures the fact that when some of the institutions had already lost hundreds of millions of dollars, and federal regulators wanted to close them down, their directors knew that precious time could be bought by making the right-sized contribution to elected officials of one party or the other—or, sometimes, both.

The essence of the savings-and-loan scandal is not fraud or corruption, or even influence-buying; it is that elected officials were willing to stand by and allow large-scale swindling of their constituents. Though many people saw the debacle approaching, no one in a position of power seems to have had any interest in preventing it. Indeed, if the savings-and-loan crisis and the fantastic looting of the nation's treasure which occasioned it prove one thing, it is that the public officials we elect have become —in large part because of the way we elect them—utterly incapable of defending the public interest, or even of recognizing what the public interest is.

Both Iran-Contra and the savings-and-loan scandal can be traced to long-standing problems—the former to the struggle between Congress and the executive branch over the conduct of foreign policy, the latter to the increasingly corrupting methods that public officials use to fund their campaigns. But the idea that the system itself has problems —that the perpetual fund-raising associated with campaigns has made our politics venal and uncompetitive and our politicians increasingly timid, and that real and sweeping change is needed—has few champions among the people who are in a position to do something about it. Change would require self-scrutiny, which would be painful, even politically dangerous. It's much more convenient to reduce our political crises to the evil deeds of a few isolated figures (Oliver North, with his shredder; Charles Keating, with his real-estate schemes), and to confine reform to the task of putting away the latest crop of villains—a never-ending task that merely punctuates our scandals rather than resolves them.



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Star

Flora Baldini is an African elephant with a résumé, and until the end of October she will be spending part of each day inside a yellow-and-white tent in a parking lot across from the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Majestic Theatre. The rest of the time, she will be playing the Majestic as part of the cast of "Endangered Species," a new dramatic work by Martha Clarke. Her co-stars will definitely include three horses—a Clydesdale named Jack, a Percheron named Mr. Grey, and a miniature horse named Little Mike—and a bunch of human beings; still in the apprentice category are a capuchin monkey named Tony and a goat named Bert.

When we paid a call on the tent one afternoon, we found all six animals resting quietly, in the company of their handler, Gerald Balding. "Stand back!" he said. "She doesn't know you yet." He was referring to Flora, who was grazing on a pile of hay to our immediate left. We retreated several paces and studied her. As elephants go, Flora, who has already appeared in the movies "Baby: Secret of the Lost Legend" and "Big Top Pee-Wee," is positively photogenic. Her head is small in proportion to her body, and her leafy ears are exceptionally large and give her the look of a fashion model with long, teased hair. Her legs are a little long for her body, and if we hadn't been in the company of three horses we might have called her coltish. Two of her legs, we noticed, were tethered to a chain with enough slack to let her move in place.

Mr. Balding, a tall, animated Englishman with a ready smile and a commanding gaze, picked up a handful of carrots and brought them over. He offered one to Flora, and she curled her delicate trunk backward, then extended it full length and gently took the carrot from him. He patted her skin, which is the color of half-dry concrete. "Yes," he said. "She's a real bully."

While we practiced offering her carrots, Mr. Balding filled us in on her background. Flora, who is nine years old and is named for one of Babar's children, is from Tanzania. She was orphaned as a baby, when her mother was shot by poachers. At that time, Mr. Balding's uncle, David Balding, who is a well-known animal trainer, heard about Flora and several other orphaned baby elephants, and arranged for them to be shipped to the United States. Most of them went to zoos, but in 1985 David Balding founded a theatrical enterprise and named it the Circus Flora, after its star. The company, which tours in the United States and abroad, is based in St. Louis, and includes several other animals—the horses Jack and Little Mike among them—and some clowns and virtuoso acrobats. The format of the show, though, is not your average popcorn spectacle but real, legit theatre, Gerald Balding told us. Flora, for example, considers her role that of a light comedienne—at least, onstage. Offstage, she is a pachyderm of another color. "She winters at the Metro Zoo in Miami, and she lords it over six other punks," Mr. Balding said, adding, "Punks is a circus term for young elephants." Miss Clarke met up with Circus Flora in 1988 and immediately proposed a collaboration.

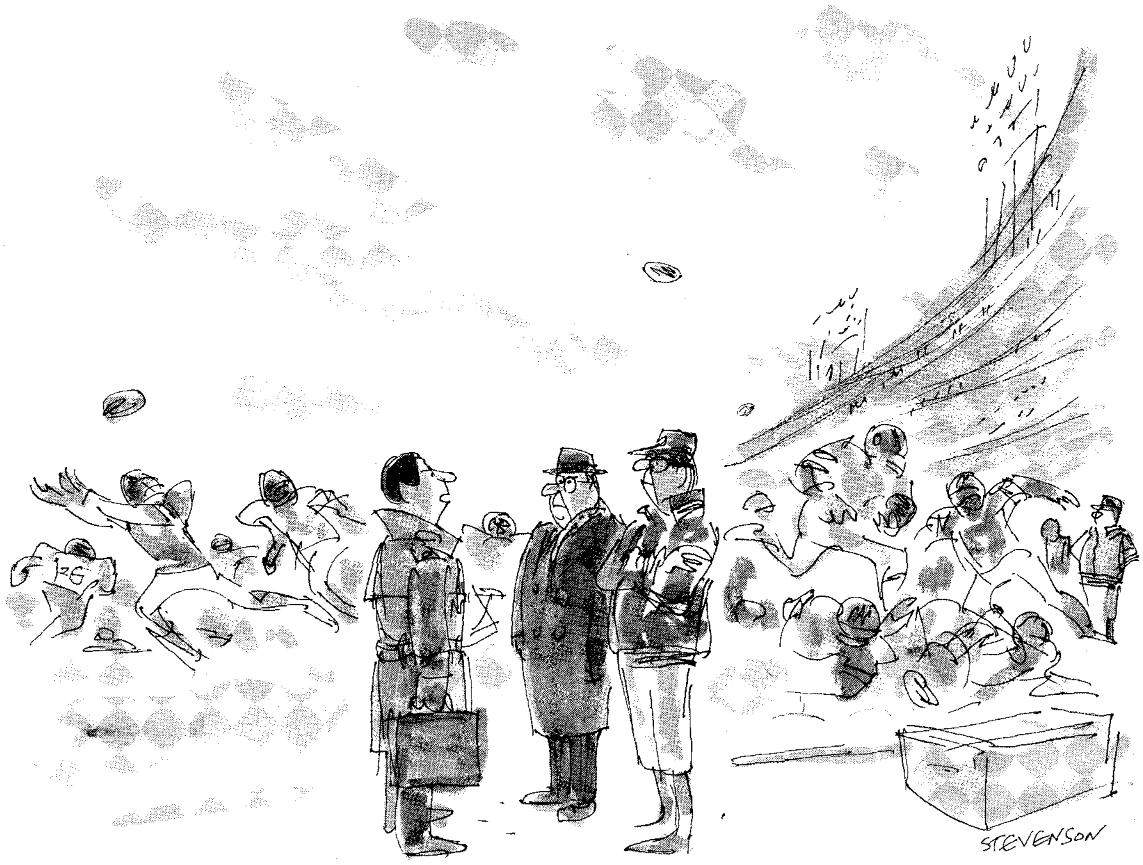
Flora's life span is expected to be sixty years, and during that time she may undergo as many changes in appearance as a human being might. Instead of being short-waisted and long-legged, she could end up with a boxier figure, Mr. Balding said, but she will probably always keep that full, teased look around her face. Flora has various ways of making herself understood. She trumpets, she flares her ears (not a friendly sign, Mr. Balding said), and, on occasion, she lifts her tail. But the most expressive part of her is her eyes. "You can tell from them if she's going to be nice or nasty," Mr. Balding told us. "You can tell when she knows that she's being talked about, or when she's taking the Mickey out of you." She prepares for her stage appearances with a bath and a little Vaseline around her lids—"to bring out the darker tones," Mr. Balding said.

"Is she happy?" we asked.

"As long as she has a social life, she'll be happy," Mr. Balding said.

We looked around at the horses, posing in their stalls; at the goat, Bert, dozing on his knees; and at the monkey, Tony, getting his stomach scratched by Mr. Balding. Mr. Balding looked around, too, but he did not see the same peaceable kingdom. "Now, Flora hates Bert," he said. "Bert hates Tony. Tony hates Bert, and he really hates Flora. In St. Louis, the first time Tony escaped he got into Flora's pen, and suddenly I saw him flying through the air. He'll attack her. He doesn't have any teeth, but sometimes you can see him savagely gumming Flora's ankles. They all hate each other. It's a mutual hate relationship."

The next day, we touched base with Miss Clarke by phone. "I love animals," she said. "But the elephant thought she was going to be in light comedy, she comes in and bats her eyes. She has the mentality of Eloise at the Plaza—a real brat. I thought I was going to get a Bergman actress—she's in a *serious* work. Tony, the monkey, doesn't take direction. He has his own agenda. He's a wonderful monkey, but I don't want him running around the theatre. Today, I'm having to change everything from what it was this summer in Massachusetts, when we played in a tent. I threw out a bed and several chairs we'd had on the set, and I'm going to replace them with a dead chicken."



"My client wants a fifty-per-cent salary boost, a bonus guarantee, and a snappy choreographed victory dance he can do after he makes a touchdown."

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Final

A WOMAN we know writes:

I'm one of the five or six Americans who are not conversant with the world of sport. Nevertheless, an old friend of mine—actually, my former husband, Eddie, who's still hoping to complete my education—invited me to go to Flushing Meadow for the final day of the U.S. Open. Immediately after accepting, I started to feel guilty about occupying a seat that should have gone to someone more deserving, so the whole week beforehand I made an effort to read the sports pages and watch the players being interviewed now and again on television. At first, I did this with a sense of doing something extremely esoteric—or as if I were penetrating a secret society that had long been operating right under my nose—but at a certain point I suddenly found myself on an affectionate, global-village first-name basis with Boris and Steffi and Ivan.

We arrived at the Open at the conclusion of the women's doubles, beneath a roof of clouds. As we settled into our seats, below us on the court Martina and Gigi, flanked by two guys in suits, and standing before an honor guard of eight kids supporting American flags, held up their silver bowl for the many camera people. Martina, cradling a spray of flowers like a ballerina, signed autographs on her way out. A few minutes later, an eleven-year-old boy named David Schwartz turned up in our section with Martina's headband, and told us the strategy he'd used to get it (the same method by which he'd extracted similar items from other famous tennis players): he had barrelled up and cried, *"Martina! Great game! Can I have your headband?"* He showed the headband to his family, who were sitting nearby, and to Eddie and me, and we all looked at it and felt the cloth. It was surprising: pristine, silky, and not at all sweaty—as if Martina, instead of smashing her way to her thirty-first Grand Slam doubles championship, had been, like us, just sitting around and downing Coney Island dogs with kraut.

Eddie and I took a break. Inside the stadium, opposite one of the uncountable snack booths, was a bronze bas-relief of Major Walter Clopton Wingfield, his head gently tipped, his expression oddly modest despite his epaulets and medals. Born Ruabon, Wales, 1833; died London, 1912. "In 1874 he gave the world the game of tennis." (Actually, I later found out, he published his book of rules in 1873. The plaque commemorates the moment when, as every champion must, he got aggressive: 1874 was when he took out his patent.) Next to Wingfield was Don Budge, whose plaque commemorated his 1938 Grand Slam. Don has fascinating sculpted bronze hair, each wavy strand in place; smallish teeth, with interesting definitional spaces between them; and an entirely pleasant expression. I stood communing with him. He looked like a shy, slight, nice second cousin of Jerry Lee Lewis. Behind me, the boys' final was on, crowds had built up at the gates, and people were strategizing about how to get in fast. A man said to the back of his wife's hair, "O.K. Now. Muscle ahead."

At last, the men's final was about to begin. Someone who looked like Bert Parks was there—fresh from Atlantic City, I guess. The comedian Alan King was there, looking terribly serious. Linda Evans sat in the front row, wearing elegant clothes, her beautiful, powerful neck straining out of her beautiful, powerful shoulders. (My mother, who knows about this stuff, told me later that Linda had been there not simply as a citizen but as a representative of Clairol.)

A guy named Mark Fairchild, in a navy blazer and white slacks, and holding a straw hat with a colorful band, gave a genuinely stunning rendition of the National Anthem. Afterward, he was patted by two people standing near the gate, as if in compensation for the brevity of his relevance. Then came the introduction of Andre and Pete: "giant killer . . . five-set battle."

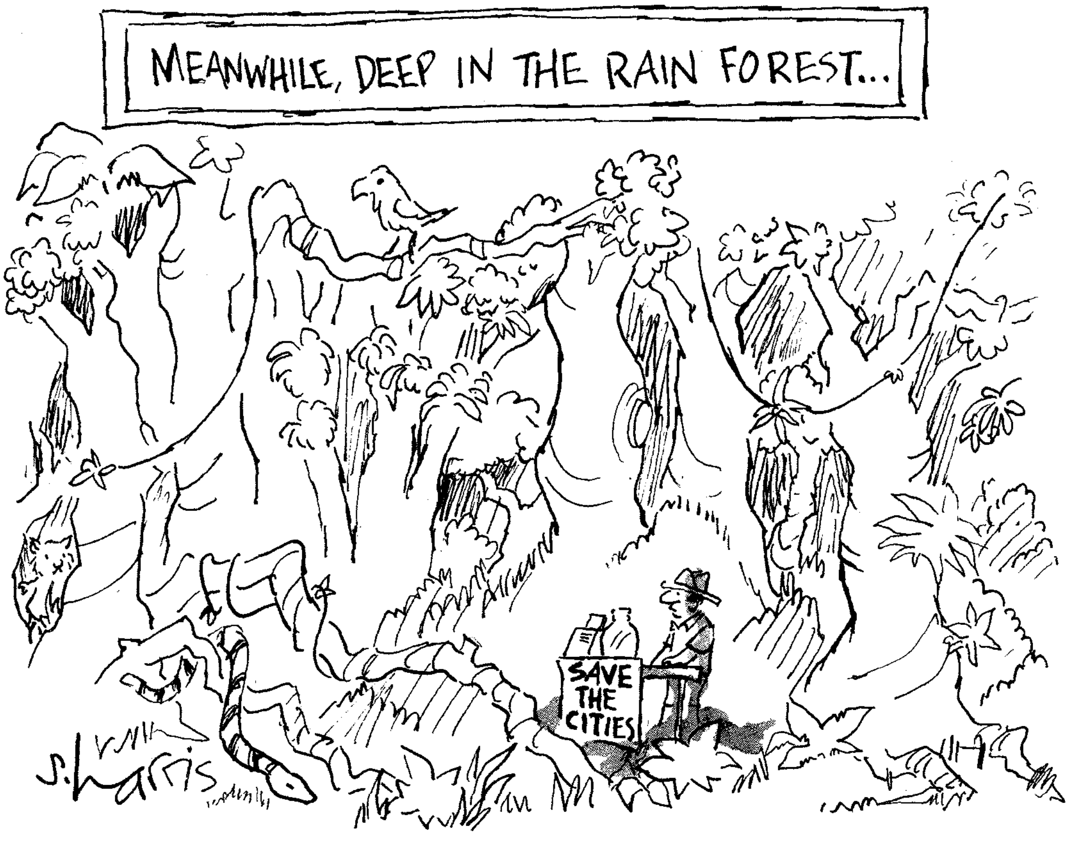
True fandom in practice seems to mean maniacal attention to detail and, at its peak moments, a trance state bordering on artistic coma. Time slows. You see everything. At the boys' match, watching young Gaudenzi shake his round, sun-kissed golden head, I suddenly recalled, for the first time in years, something vivid and complex: the feel of the back of a boy's neck under your hand. Now, in wonderful silence (Mayor Dinkins had got the LaGuardia planes rerouted), I looked at the dramatic yet fetching way Agassi's shirt flew up to reveal his body as he desperately tried to counter the deadly hundred-and-twenty-mile-an-hour first serves of the serene, suddenly invincible Sampras. The Fuji Film blimp swam slowly into view, turned in the sky, and eased off on a diagonal.

The wind was kicking up, the sky seriously lowering. We all knew that Pete Sampras's father, unable to bear the tension of watching, was at the mall or at the movies or washing the car. His son at this moment was an apparent paradox—a Buddha-like blur, as if in his own mind he were moving as slowly and inevitably as in instant replay. On the back of Andre's vivid chartreuse-sleeved shirt, a gray wave was breaking. Pete, silkily serving, looked preternaturally calm. Virtually everyone there—even I—foresaw the outcome. "Too bad it's not more of a contest, but you're having the *experience*," Eddie said.

Opening Day

NORDSTROM is a fancy department-store chain based in Seattle that makes retailing an event rather than just retailing. For instance, many Nordstrom's stores feature live people playing genuine pianos rather than piped-in music. And Nordstrom's employees are famously nice: they project the feeling that Nordstrom's is a family and Nordstrom's shoppers are distant relatives who have dropped by for a visit and just happen to look great in everything they try on. The other day, we drove out to Paramus for the opening of a new Nordstrom's, at Garden State Plaza—the first branch in the Northeast—and on the way we heard some excited people on the radio singing a jingle about how great Nordstrom's is, how much fun customers will have buying things there, and how delighted everyone is that Nordstrom's has joined the Garden State Plaza team. The parking lot at Garden State Plaza was mobbed. We drove around for ten minutes, stalking departing shoppers, and finally latched on to a woman in a flowered shift who looked shopped out. A red Toyota with New Jersey plates latched on to her as well. The shopper heaved her Nordstrom's bags into the back of her Lincoln and pulled out, and, after making it clear to the Toyota, in a firm but excited way, that we had got there first, we slid into the space.

For opening day, there was also valet parking—if you wanted to pay for it. "I'm not parking this piece of junk," one attendant remarked to another, pointing to an early-model Hornet some-


MEANWHILE, DEEP IN THE RAIN FOREST...
SAVE THE CITIES
S. Harris

one had left at the curb.

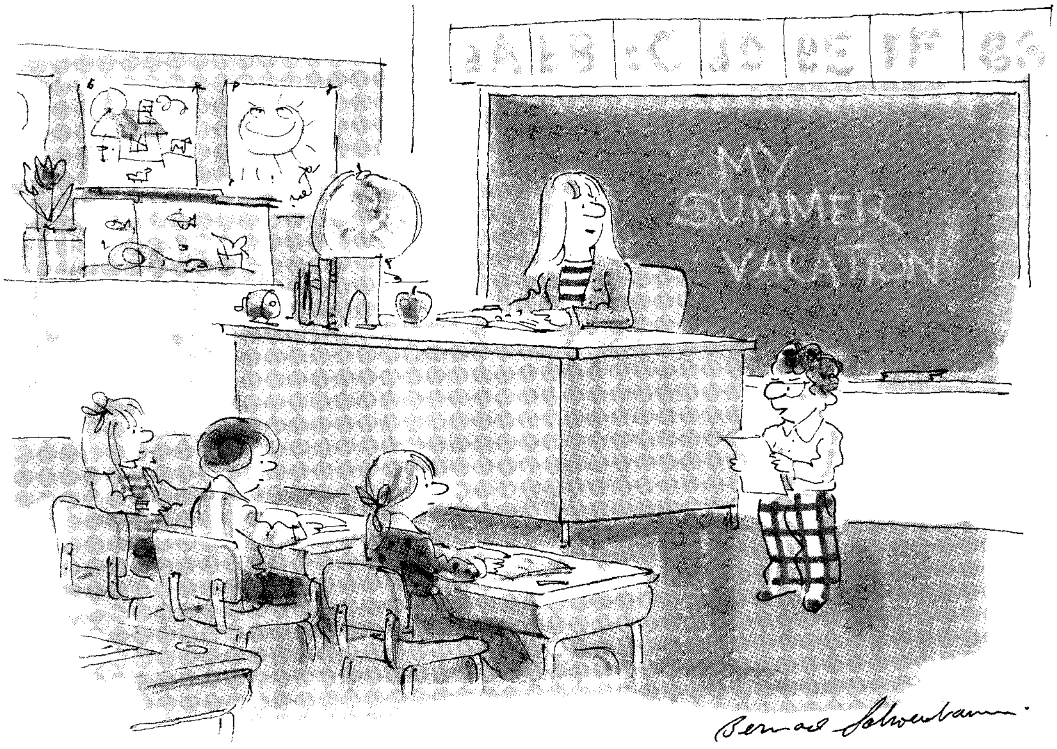
"Get out of here—yes, you are," his associate responded.

"No way," the first attendant said.

"You know what, man? You're useless," the second one said.

"You should check out the store," the first attendant said to us, ignoring him. "It's really *rocking*."

Nordstrom's is doughnut-shaped, the hole of the doughnut being a huge atrium and the rest of the doughnut being three circular floors decorated in muted colors. A large escalator zigzags up the atrium and affords a view of the piano, which is on the main level. The second floor is mostly shoes. A couple of hundred people were milling around that department, and many hundreds more were walking purposefully toward the escalator. A genteel voice whispered over the paging system, "Katharine Nordstrom. John Miller. Thank you."



"A note of warning: The following report may contain material not suitable for the squeamish."

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In the center of the shoe department, a spiky-haired woman in a rust-colored blazer was rearranging Italian suède pumps in fourteen different colors on a low display table. "It just killed me seeing all these people waiting to get in here this morning," she remarked to us. "When they opened the doors, all of us employees were lined up at the entrances and we applauded as the shoppers came in. That's the kind of experience this is. We really gave our shoppers a standing ovation."

We asked whether every day at Nordstrom's would begin with a standing ovation.

"I don't know about *that*," she said. "I do think it's going to be an exciting store, though."

A tall man in a navy-blue suit standing nearby said, "You were here when they opened?"

"Was I ever!" she said. "You working here, too?"

He shook his head. "Manufacturer's rep. These are mine." He pointed to some fancily stitched black cowboy boots hanging near a video monitor that was showing a tape of dress shoes being folded in half. "I got my first reorder already," he went on. "The *employees* bought out the stock. This place just has a family feel. Everything is top-notch. The shoe department has tremendous penetration. All of Macy's shoe department was here already to take a look at this penetration. 'Penetration' is not my word, it's the industry word, by the bye."

On the escalator, a man in jogging clothes pushed his way up a few steps to tap the shoulder of a man wearing an unstructured gray linen suit.

"Great suit," the jogger said.

"Nordstrom's," the other man replied. "I'm working in men's furnishings, and I bought it during my lunch break. Seriously. All of us employees went shopping during our break. Some of us dropped about a grand."

"Is that an endorsement or something?" the jogger asked.

"I suppose it is," the man said. "What can I tell you? We're all pretty enthusiastic is the truth."

In a department labelled "Special Occasion," six women wearing fashionably stretchy clothes were examining a seventh, who was trying on a puffy red satin shrug over a beaded slip dress. The Special Occasion saleswoman stood at a discreet distance. Her arms were folded, and she looked contemplative but involved.

"I want something sexy and fabulous," the woman in the shrug was saying. "This is not sexy and fabulous. This is something else. This is I don't know what."

"Marcia!" one of her companions said reprovingly.

The saleswoman stepped forward. "I think we're going to find something for you," she said. "In fact, I'm positive about that."

"You sound very sure," Marcia said.

"I am very sure," the saleswoman said. "I've never been so sure of anything in my life."

A woman in the group whose hair was tied back with a foulard-print scarf said, "You know what? This is strictly for gooney birds."

The saleswoman looked stricken. "You mean the store?" she asked.

"Of course not," the woman said. "I mean my hair. I don't think women of my age should be wearing long hair anymore. Do you have a salon? Dear God, tell me you have a salon."

"Marcia, you keep trying," another member of the group said. "We're going this instant to sign up for charge accounts."

JELLY DOUGHNUTS

SO far, Simmi hasn't asked me one single question about Buck—not a direct one, not an indirect one, not one. She also doesn't seem a bit interested in hearing anything about when he and I were together, or how we got together, or about us splitting up.

It's probably all right that she doesn't feel any need to know that kind of stuff, because I don't think it would matter much to their being together. But when Buck called just *now*, I started thinking of the time I'd tried to find out why he was so quiet, and he mentioned his mother, how she'd had a way of speaking *for* him.

"You mean if somebody asked you a question, she'd answer it?"

"No," he said. "It wasn't like that."

"You mean she used to tell you just what to say whenever you had to speak to anyone about something important?"

"No, that wasn't it, either," he said. "When it came to her and me, she had a way of saying things . . . so that even though *she* was speaking to *me* . . . it was as if I were doing the talking. To her."

WHEN Buck came by here this evening, he asked me if I remembered the lullaby he told me about once. The one his mother would sing to him in Penobscot, then in English.

> I can just about see them going away.
> There she was left
> on a little islet.
> She began to pick
> gooseberries.

He told me that when he sang it to Simmi, she said, "It's beautiful. But please don't sing it again."

Buck's so interested in finding out what other childhoods might have been like that he's always trying things like that. They usually work. With me, and, I'm sure, others, they've worked. So he already knows, since I'm Simmi's sister, and I knew Buck first, that our mother sang to us:

> Sleep, baby, sleep.
> The large stars are the sheep . . . .

She sang it in four languages—Polish, Yiddish, German, and English. Mama would still sing it to Simmi anytime, if Simmi would just call up and ask her to.

Yes, Buck's heard it from me, but he hoped to hear it from Simmi, who's on to his wanting to know what it was like for her, growing up in Larchmont.

LAST month, on her first day in New York with me, I arranged for my little sister to go to my stylist and get the works. Simmi didn't know it, but I made the appointment while she was already on her way there. Not everybody in the place was clued in to what was going on; I heard that when the woman who does my facials—and is pretty sure she knows everything about me—asked Simmi how she heard about her, and Simmi said, "I'm Etta December's sister," the woman kept on applying the steam mist and said, "Etta doesn't have a sister."

When Simmi told me that, I started to tell her about something a woman who lived with Buck in 1987 said to me, but the second I said "1987," Simmi broke in to say that it seemed like an awfully long time ago, so I just let the story trail off.

I guess I was wondering if she'd be interested to know that Buck can play guitar. I only found out by chance, when Buck and I were in Prospect Park one day and he noticed a boy with an electric guitar and a little battery-powered amp who was having some trouble tuning up. Buck says to him, "Here, let me try." He tuned it, started playing, people gathered round; it was a scene. And it was like Buck was somebody else. After a while he gave the guitar back to the boy, and we kept on walking. I said, "Buck, you could earn a living at that." He just laughed. Then he told me how he'd taught himself to play guitar when he was little. He and his mother saved up to buy one, and she arranged for him to keep it with some people who lived at the other end of town and to practice in their garage. Buck didn't say anything else, as if that had been a normal way of doing things, so after a while I said, "Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why did you have to keep and play the guitar at someone else's house?"

"Oh," he said; then, as if I'd know what he was talking about, "Dad." A few steps later, he said, "So there were only a couple of times I ever got to play for Mum."

If I don't know much about Buck, others probably know less. The woman I'd started to mention to Simmi, the one he'd lived with for most of '87, I'd seen at a Christmas party he took her to back then. She and I were just sitting around, there was no problem, and then, to make small talk, I said, "Isn't it something when Buck picks up a guitar?"

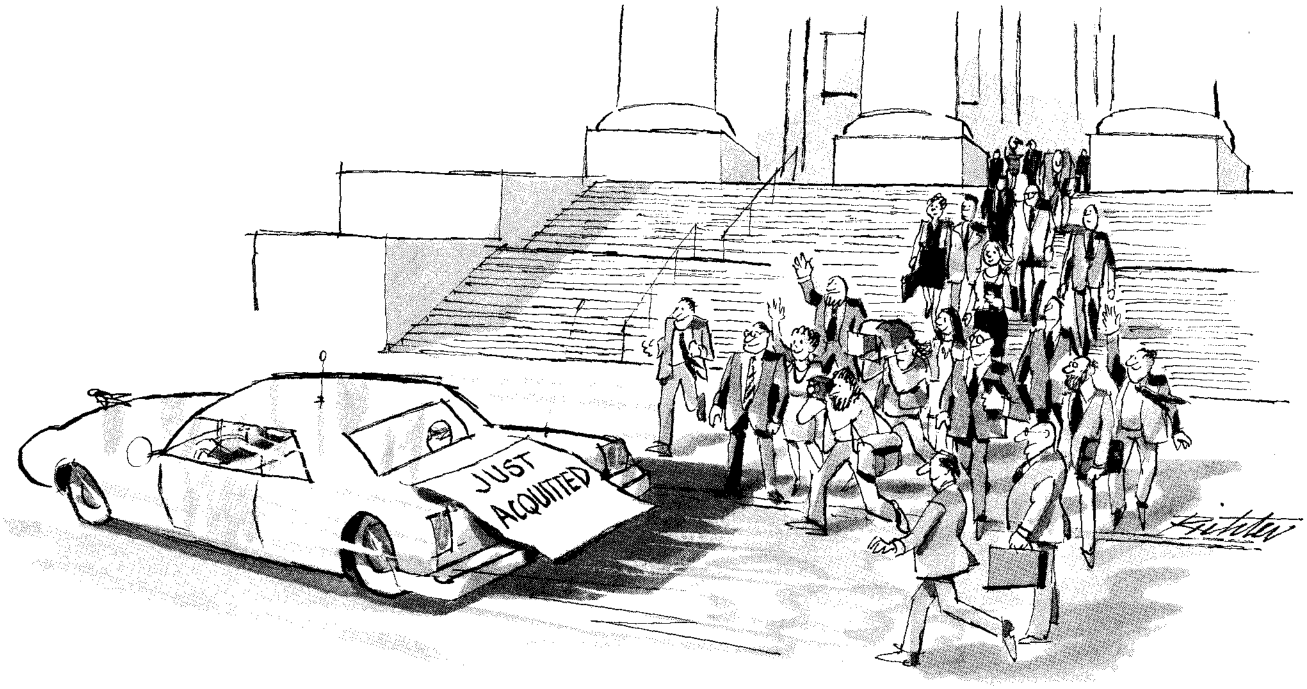
She got almost hostile; I could see she thought I was playing some trick on her, and she says, probably the same way the woman doing Simmi's facial did, so sure, so coolly, "Buck can't play guitar."

LAST week Buck told me, there he is walking up Broadway with his arm around Simmi, and he doesn't say anything to her, but when he sees something in a store window that he thinks she might like, and lets go of her a moment while he goes to look closer—the instant his arm's not there, Simmi won't take another step in any direction. She's saying, "What happened to *me*? What happened to *me*?" Buck says that if I walked by and I wasn't her sister, I'd think Simmi was kidding. Because then she says, "Just a minute ago—no, just a *second* ago—I was here. What happened to *me*?" She's a riot; she's so funny, anyone would think. If she *is* being funny, it's just at the very first, like when someone smiles without really meaning to.

So Buck tells her he was just looking at something he thought she'd like. "Something for you, Simmi."

She says, "Who, me? Who's *me*? There was a me who was walking with someone, but then the *someone* wasn't there. So what happened to *me*?"

Buck told me that he knew he couldn't win this one. Simmi wouldn't walk toward him or away, and of



course she wouldn't swear or anything like that. So rather than have her get upset, he has to take the, oh, five steps to put his arm around her and steer her to the window. But of course by then whatever had caught his eye was beside the point, so they turned away together and kept on walking.

Simmi's only been in New York three weeks, but the second night she was here Buck took her to a coffee place he knew, and now Simmi makes sure he takes her there every night. Maybe if there's somewhere else they have to be, something one of them *has* to do, they'll skip a night, but they couldn't miss too many, because then it would become something they used to do. And that would make it part of the past. And what she thinks is part of the past Simmi won't consider.

I've been telling Buck, "She trusts you. If she didn't, she wouldn't do any of that stuff. She'd just walk away, get out the credit cards Papa gave her, and start in on that endless driving again."

I want to help Buck, because I really started all this. I asked Simmi to come to New York for a visit and then organized that instant party with my automatic dialer. I'd known it wasn't going to be easy to get Simmi to come to New York at all, and that it would be even harder to get her to stay. The only thing the idea had going for it was that Simmi hadn't ever spent much time in New York, so there was a chance she wouldn't think of it as part of the past. I could tell she might even be looking forward to coming when she called to ask if I'd send her the Manhattan yellow pages, care of general delivery somewhere in Arizona, where she'd be in a couple of weeks. After that I got a Mailgram from Colorado, giving the name of someplace in New Mexico where I could send her the white pages. I knew that Simmi was trying to get a head start on figuring the city out. That's good, I thought; she's acting as if she's never been here before.

But if she had a theory for it, it didn't quite work out. She got here at four in the morning. Took a nap. Took a bath. Took a walk. And then she was ready to leave. So I told her I was having a party that evening—that I'd forgot to tell her—and that I was treating her to the works at my stylist in the afternoon. She said O.K., she'd get her hair cut or something, and she could leave after the party, when there wouldn't be much traffic; so I said that people don't even *start* arriving at my parties until really late. Then, while she was at the stylist, I phoned everybody on my automatic dialer.

"You know," I said to Buck, "if she hadn't taken to trusting you at that party, she'd have been tail-lights over the Triborough the very next day."

My name is, or was, Etta Dietz, and I was lucky to be born in New York City in 1952. My sister Simmi was born, also lucky to be born, in 1954, but just before she arrived my parents moved about twenty miles out of the city, to Larchmont, where Simmi was delivered.

Buck, born *something* MacIsaac on March 26, 1955, was my boyfriend for, at most, four weeks in 1985. Now, in 1990, he has been the boyfriend of my sister, Simmi, for three weeks and holding. Buck was born in Bangor, Maine, at the hospital closest to where his parents lived, in a one-story bungalow on a long triangular lot, on the road between Orono and Old Town.

I hadn't really seen much of Buck in the past five years. Maybe on the street, and maybe once in a while at a party somewhere. I hardly ever saw him, but I did put his number on my automatic dialer in 1985, and I never took him off. Now, because of that, I've seen him a lot in the last three weeks, because he either stops here to pick up Simmi on his way home from work or, even if he knows she's not here, drops by anyway to ask me a question about something that Simmi's done or hasn't done, said or won't say.

Buck isn't known for being very

talkative. Otherwise, on the phone just now I would have asked him, "Buck, were you lucky to be born?" Of course, I wouldn't have meant it in the same sense that Simmi and I were lucky, which is *at all*, or in the very best sense, which is *and every minute since*, but just how it looks now to him.

It may be that Buck is not always good at explaining things, but I think he's a good listener. Over the years, I told every one of my boyfriends the most important story of all my family's stories, and as far as I know, and this was even before he knew Simmi, he's the only one who gave up eating jelly doughnuts on the spot and forever.

SKAGIT VALLEY, 1980

Long after my last drop of adrenaline
has been diluted, I remember three young men, rural
Anyburg. Bored, we drove the back roads fast.
Beer cans clattered. Tires squealing, we took the curves.
I could not forget Nastassia Kinski's lips

fleshing out the flat drive-in screen: real life.
(Not one of us had ever had sex or held a job.)
Maybe all we wanted was a woman with legs spread
in a wheelbarrow of twenty-dollar bills, and beer foam
falling from the sky: life should be so easy. We knew

little about domination: the brutality hinted at
by the staples stuck in a centerfold's belly, or
the way a time clock bites down to set the pay.
We submitted to standard dreams. We believed
the mass media run by big men bragging. But

we had some cunning too: we built up the forces
in the bunkers of our tear ducts, and didn't talk much.

—Roger Fanning

• •

"I WAS eleven and Simmi was nine," I'd told Buck, "and it was in our house in Larchmont. My father goes out and buys a big bag of fresh jelly doughnuts.

"It wasn't that we'd never eaten jelly doughnuts before, but he and my mother had decided that the day had come that we were both old enough to understand what they went through living in Poland during the war. How they survived to get out after, to America.

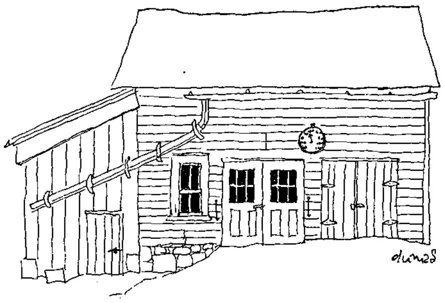
"Papa said that as the Germans advanced he and Mama fled from the town where they lived, near the southern border—to Warsaw, but not to the ghetto. Papa wasn't Jewish, but he had to hide Mama, who was. He hated to walk in the street for fear that someone who knew who he was married to might inform on him, or that the authorities might follow him back to her.

"Before, my parents both had good professions, but now they were in hiding, in some small rooming house. They had to make a living quietly, and somehow they settled on jelly doughnuts. There were lots of cafés, and many of their suppliers were disappearing.

"Papa used the bit of money they had to buy flour, eggs, shortening, sugar, and jam. But he was afraid to hire just anybody to deliver the doughnuts. Then he noticed a little boy who'd lost his parents. 'He was even younger than you are now,' Papa said to Simmi. 'And he probably didn't really know that he was Jewish. And, like your mama and your sister here, he had blue eyes and was fair—that was good, because he could blend in with the general population.' And they took him in, like a son, and as a delivery boy.

"They taught him where to deliver the doughnuts and how to collect the money. They told the boy to take only gold coins, because the Polish money was worthless. At the time, jelly doughnuts were a boon to the cafés, but Papa said that didn't mean he and Mama were living well or anything—they spent just enough to feed themselves, pay expenses, and buy more supplies to make the doughnuts. Because if they wanted to be able to save for their escape, they had to live very simply.

"Papa said everything went O.K. for about nine months, and then one day a Gestapo man followed the little boy home. If it had been a younger agent—they were more ideological—it would have been the end. But it was an older man, and he was on the take. He demanded a cut. So he began to collect a percentage from them, and that made it more difficult to save money. They worked even harder, for about three more months, and then one day the boy didn't come back on time. They waited and waited. Then somebody from one of the cafés sent word that the boy had been taken away. So Mama and Papa took the gold coins they'd saved and sewed them under the buttons of their coats, inside the lining, and fled eastward that night.

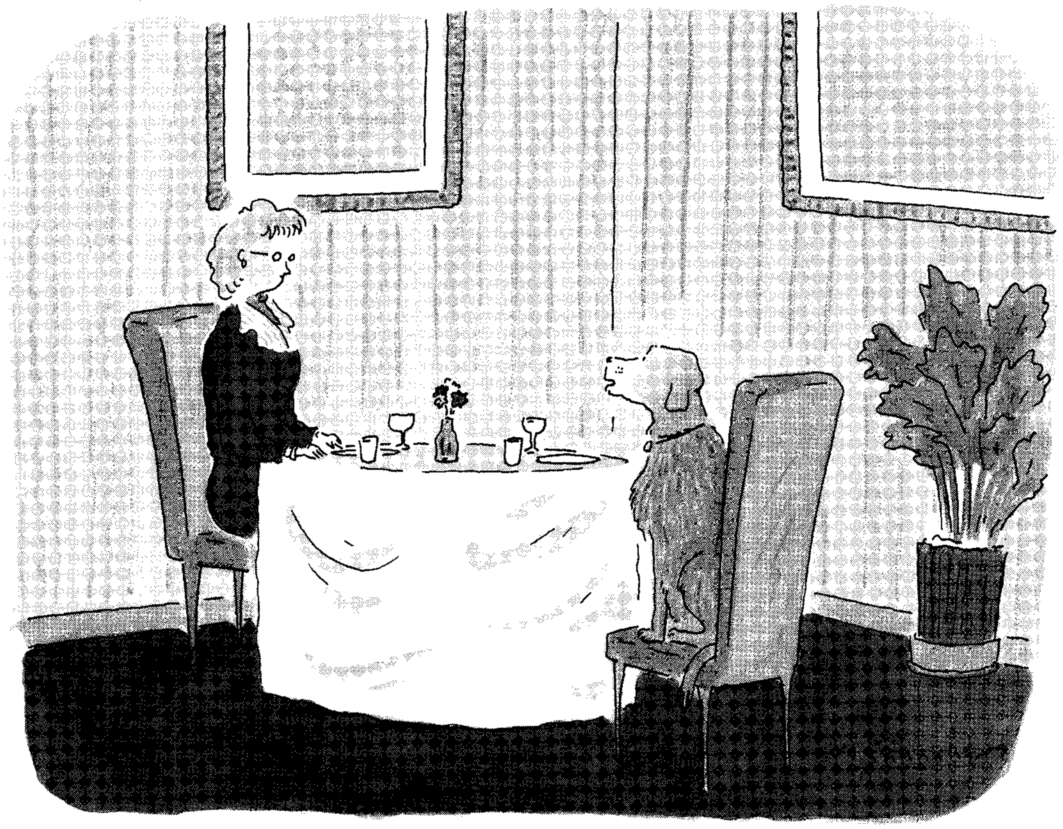


"Papa said to us, 'And in all that time, girls, because those doughnuts were all that we'd had to sell, in that whole year we never ate one of them.' Mama added that whenever Papa sprinkled the powdered sugar over the finished ones his Adam's apple would go up and down with desire.

"Then Papa opens the bag, takes out the jelly doughnuts he'd just bought, and puts them on little plates and passes them around. 'One for Simmi. One for Etta. One for Mama. And one for me.' We all started to eat—all except Simmi. That's the first time I ever saw that expression she still gets. We looked at her and her eyes were wet, and wide with fear, and she said, 'What about the *boy*? Where did they take the *boy*?' "

IF Buck drops by my place when Simmi's not here, he's not coming to complain—he's just trying to understand. "Simmi won't even let me talk about what we had for lunch the day before," he might say. Or "What happened to Simmi?" he'll ask. What in the past, he means. I always tell him to believe me, nothing ever did. "But now you are," I say to Buck. "Now you are, and you're the only thing that's ever really happened to Simmi."

The evening Buck stopped in to ask me if I'd noticed that Simmi never swears, I had to tell him why—it was part of the past, so Simmi never would. I told him that when she was little she heard one of my mother's friends use the word "ass." It wasn't a word Mama ever used, so later Simmi asked her if what the lady said was a bad word. And Mama didn't want Simmi to think her friends were saying bad words so she said, "It's really not." But then the next time the lady came over and said to Simmi, "How are you doing today?" Simmi gave her a big smile and said, "I fell on my ass." Simmi got sent to her room, and everyone was all flustered. That was the last time anyone heard her swear.



"You sit tight. I'll fetch a waiter."

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BUCK's never actually come out with it, but sometimes I think he wants to know why Simmi and I are so unalike. The closest I can come to explaining it to myself is that it's as if the same light has fallen on different films.

When I turned thirteen and moved up to another school, I changed my last name. It all went more or less according to plan, and I think all plans probably involve some fear. But the more I watched the war documentaries on television, and the more I read about Poland during the Second World War, and the more I asked Papa questions, the more I figured that if my Jewish mother could make jelly doughnuts there, in the middle of Warsaw, and survive inside the shifting borders of Poland from 1938 to 1945, I could be brave enough to change my name from the German spelling, "Dietz," which Papa'd changed it to for protection, back to "Dec," the Polish spelling. So I wrote "Etta Dec" on every school form in grade seven, and after a few days my homeroom teacher came down on me and said, "Etta, what sort of name is Dec?" I didn't want to explain, and that's when I started telling people, "It's short for 'December.' "

I MIGHT have thought about it later—what happened to the boy—but Simmi noticed right away. I remember we all stopped eating and Papa told us he had heard that the boy was sent to a concentration camp, but that he must have got away. Someone who knew that Papa and Mama had survived and gone to America saw and talked to the boy, who was working on a ferryboat between Italy and Malta. And that person wrote to somebody in Poland, who wrote to somebody in America who told them.

"So," Papa says to Simmi, "the boy was all right. Now you can eat your jelly doughnut."

But Simmi just looks at the doughnut on her plate and asks, "Did he—did the boy ever eat one of the jelly doughnuts you and Mama made?"

"No, none of us did."

"Then," said Simmi, "I think I'd rather have ice cream." So the rest of us didn't finish our doughnuts and we all ate ice cream instead.

I've been thinking about this a lot lately. When Buck heard the story from me—even though he didn't know or ask anything about Simmi, and even though he and I weren't together for very long after that—right then, on the spot and forever, he stopped eating jelly doughnuts.

"SAFE with me? Comfortable with me?" That's what Buck said, the day after the party, when I told him how I thought Simmi felt with him. "And of all the guys on my automatic dialer I'm glad it was you," I told Buck. "And she even got to sleep with you."

Buck said, "I really wouldn't call it—well, it was sleeping *only*. She wouldn't even let me take my leather jacket off; when I started to, she gave this little shake of her head to say no." Buck looked at me as if he didn't know what was going on. "Safe with me? Comfortable with . . .?" She had him so afraid of seeming forward that he kept his boots on. "*Breathing* together, maybe. And sometimes our kneecaps touched under that old opened-up cotton sleeping bag—that was it."

Simmi hadn't wanted to use my convertible sofa, so they'd slept beside it on a small rug, with Buck facing her, she *in her wool sweater and jeans, nestled* where the floor met the wall.

"PUH. Puhnub." My father just couldn't get it right when he heard it the first time. Almost like when he first heard "crunchy granola" and thought it was one long new word.

"Puh-nob-scot." I said it slow into the phone. "Penobscot. Well, he's half Penobscot, really."

Almost twenty years in the city, and I've never met a man that I've trusted like Simmi trusts Buck. I mean, I even met *Buck*, but it wasn't so much that I trusted him—for me, I think, it was those high cheekbones and that straight, jet-black hair. But Simmi had only been in New York about twenty hours before she did—Simmi, who gets uncomfortable if a man even looks at her.

When I called my parents in Coral Gables, where they live now, and told Papa about it, and that I didn't think Buck could support her, right away he said, "I'll send checks." He said that anything was better than that constant motel-to-motel movement of hers. That he wouldn't go broke either way. "If only we can get her to stay in just one place," he said.

After I got out of college, I had a way of advancing from job to job, but when Simmi graduated she would start out on one thing, then quit for an entirely other kind of thing. It didn't seem to matter so much at the time, because, even though she was changing jobs, she was always working. Now it matters, because she doesn't want to do any job she's done before, so there's almost nothing that she'll do.

"I love L.A., and I can't understand people who say that it doesn't know how to be a city."

I've been telling Buck and everybody not to get Simmi wrong. She likes to work. It's just that you can tell by the look of fear in her eyes when someone says to her, "Why don't you work in public relations?" and she says, "No, I worked in public relations," that it's useless saying to her, "Yes, but this is a different city, you'd be at a different firm, and you could try a different position there."

When I told Buck about calling Papa, he said he felt a little funny about the money part, but he'd agree as long as we let Simmi know all about it, so we did. Then Buck says to Simmi and me that our parents sounded really interesting, and it would be nice if they came up for a visit. So Simmi wouldn't have to say anything, I said to Buck, "They kind of like the idea of Simmi better than the real Simmi." When Buck asked just what that meant, Simmi came right out and said, "It means they can love me better when I'm not around them."

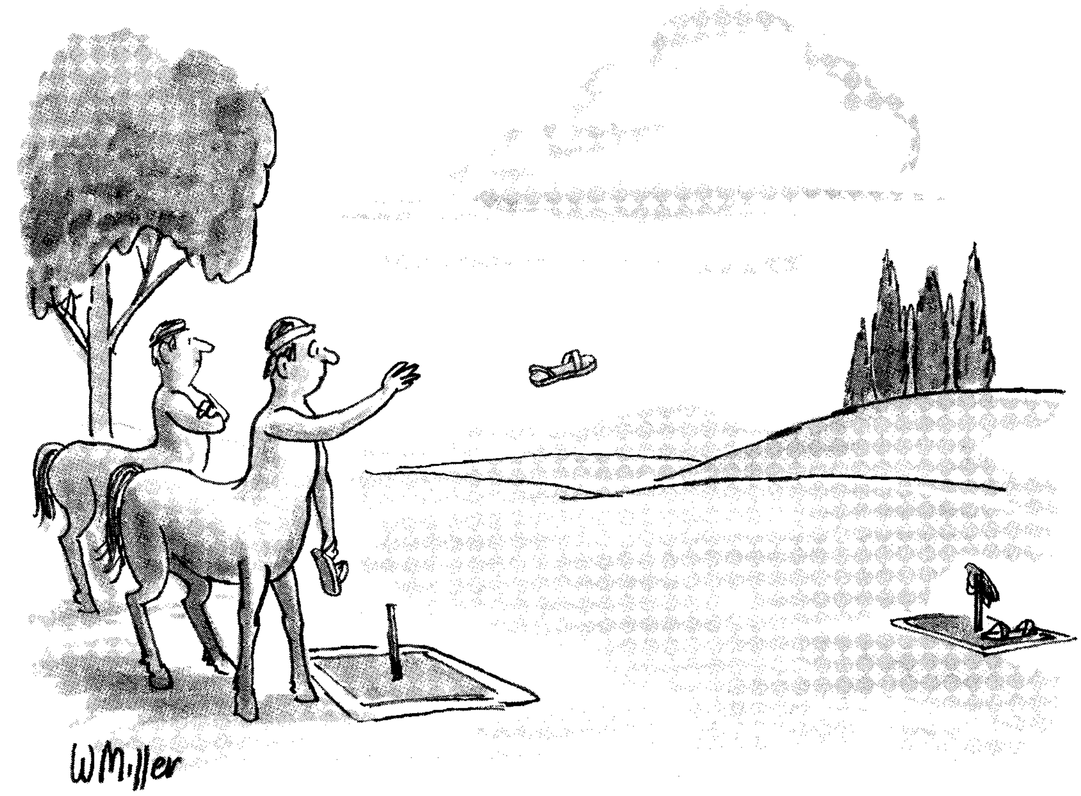
Of course, I hadn't told Buck or Simmi the whole story. During the call, Papa said that if Buck ever wanted to marry Simmi he'd buy them an apartment. And when Mama got on the phone she said that if they did get married then maybe Simmi would think, There, that's that, and then she'd get on with whatever she was supposed to do in life. But I told them that I thought the best thing to do at this point was just to take it one check at a time.

Mama and Papa both made me promise to try to get Buck to talk to Simmi about getting professional help. I hate it when they bring it up, because I never know if they're right or wrong. But I said that sooner or later I would. Then, before we finished the call, Papa said I should make sure to tell Buck about the jelly doughnuts too, so he wouldn't bring some home by mistake and ruin everything, and I said to him, "Don't worry, Papa, he already knows," which was the truth.

IF you ask Buck if that's his real first name, he'll just answer, "My mother always called me Buck." I think it's his way of making sure everyone calls him Buck now, here in New York.

He's never told me much about his growing up in Maine, just a little bit now and then, to get me talking. He would always look at me with wonder whenever I'd tell him stories of my girlhood, about how Mama would put us on the train, and Papa would meet us in the city, and take us somewhere for ice cream, and then say, "Now to the stinky children's zoo!"

If you asked Buck what he might have been doing on a summer afternoon in 1963, he'd just say something like, "Oh, making stuff. In the back yard." He wouldn't tell you that



he was using scrap lumber he'd gathered to build birdhouses to sell by the side of the road, and that that's how he helped pay for his guitar, and that he really liked to work with wood, so he got good at it, and that's how he became a cabinetmaker.

To find just that much out, I had to ask him about a dozen questions. Because Buck can't believe that anybody could find those things interesting.

I've always thought Buck has too many preconceptions of what a normal childhood's like. Even if there were some things he missed, he shouldn't confuse them with what might make him happy now. He has this idea that there's some certain way to be, that it's all around, and he's not in on it, but when he asked me something about Simmi the other day I told him, "You think you want to be with somebody cheerful, and have everything in place. If that happens, and you're happy, fine. But what if that happens, and you're not?"

Buck has admitted to me that there are times when he starts to think that Simmi's trying to tell him he really isn't so different from her. One day he took her along to Connecticut to look at some cabinet restoration work outside Stamford, and when they got near the exit to Larchmont, he said, "We could stop off."

"Sure," she said. "Someday when we're on our way back from Bangor." Bangor, Orono, Old Town—you can tell that those places seem very far away to him, and Larchmont so near, but of course he hadn't been thinking how it all might have seemed to Simmi.

WHEN Buck came by earlier this evening, he told me that he and Simmi were out for a Sunday-afternoon walk yesterday, and that they bumped into a couple of designers he was building cabinets for. Buck stopped to talk to them, but a pizza delivery must have gone by, because all of a sudden Simmi started sniffing the air and tugging at his arm, saying, "Buck, I smell pizza. Let's get out of here."

Things like that about Simmi aren't news to me. I could have just explained to Buck that, first, it has nothing to do with pizza, because you can take her to a pizza place where you can see pizza and smell pizza and eat pizza at the same time, and everything's O.K. But to just *smell* it without at least seeing it—that might make her start thinking of someplace she went for pizza in, say, 1988. Or even 1968. I could have told him that, but I thought this was a good time to keep my promise to my parents instead.

"You know, Buck," I said. "There are people who think maybe Simmi needs to see, you know, some kind of shrink. But of course I tell them that then they'd better take up a collection to send you through shrink school. Still, maybe if we could find a good professional . . . and you could talk to Simmi . . . maybe go with her. . . ."

But Buck just ran both his hands at once over those high cheekbones of his and through that shining jet-black hair. It seemed to leave his eyes extra clear as he fixed them right on mine and said, more firmly than I'd ever heard him speak, "She was right about the doughnuts."

I just nodded. Yes, she was right about the doughnuts, quick about the little boy.

So this evening he left here about a quarter after five, and I was surprised when he called me about an hour ago, at eleven-thirty, while Simmi was taking a bath. He said something about how he'd tried to make an issue out of the things that were bothering him, to see what he could get Simmi to say. And he especially wanted to get her to swear. He said they had dinner, and then she was lying on his sofa, reading a book, and he was on the floor, using her leg to prop his elbow on while he read the paper. When she says isn't it time for them to start heading out for coffee, though he's got nothing against it, he starts in on her that maybe they shouldn't go there so often, or maybe only on alternate nights, or one week to one coffee place and another week to another. He's trying to get her angry, but after he keeps it up for a bit her eyes go full of fear—first wide, then wet. "And then," Buck says, "I swore *for* her. And after a while we did go where we always go for coffee, though by that time it didn't seem like such a big deal."

Yes, they went, but not right away. Because Simmi said, "I think I'll read my book some more before we go." Buck thought she was even smiling a little when she said it. That was after he said, "Turn around. Turn around so I can kiss you."

—RICK ROFIHE

LUCY

IT was January again; the world was thin and pale and cold again; I was making a new beginning again.

I had been a girl of whom certain things were expected, none of them too bad: a career as a nurse, for example; a sense of duty to my parents; obedience to the law and worship of convention. But in one year of being away from home, that girl had gone out of existence.

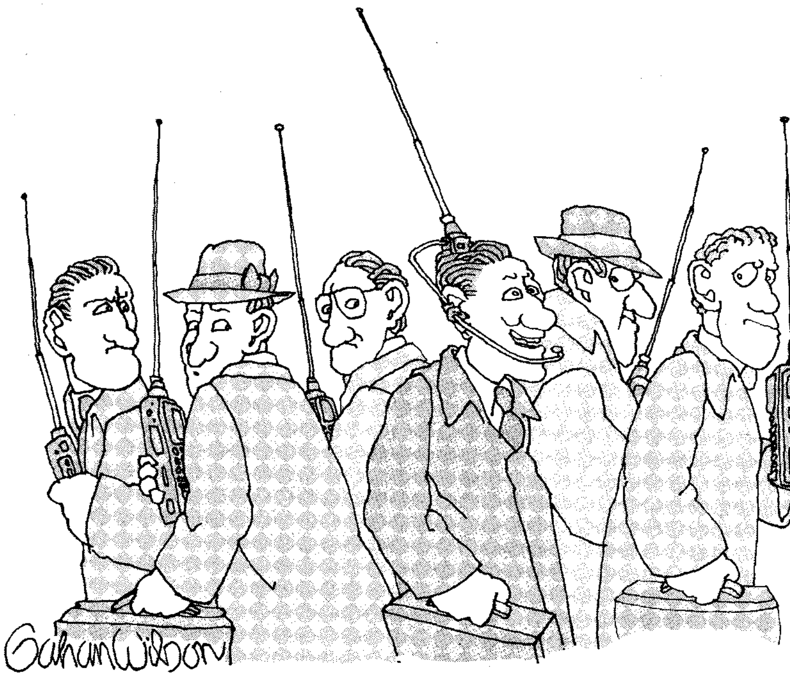
The person I had become I did not know very well. Oh, on the outside everything was familiar. My hair was the same, though now I wore it cut close to my head, and this made my face seem almost perfectly round, and so for the first time ever I entertained the idea that I might actually be beautiful. I knew that if I ever decided I was beautiful I would not make too big a thing of it. My eyes were the same. My ears were the same. The other important things about me were the same.

But the things I could not see about myself, the things I could not put my hands on—those things had changed, and I did not yet know them well. I understood that I was inventing myself, and that I was doing this more in the way of a painter than in the way of a scientist. I could not count on precision or calculation; I could only count on intuition. I did not have anything exactly in mind, but when the picture was complete I would know. I did not have position, I did not have money at my disposal. I had memory, I had anger, I had despair.

I was born on an island, a very small island, twelve miles long and eight miles wide; yet when I left it at nineteen years of age I had never set foot on three-quarters of it. I had recently met someone who was born on the other side of the world from me but had visited this island on which my family had lived for generations; this person, a woman, said to me, "What a beautiful place," and she named a village by the sea and then went on to describe a view that was unknown to me. At the time I was so ashamed I could hardly make a reply, for I had come to believe that people in my position in the world should know everything about the place they are from. I knew this: it was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1493; Columbus never set foot there but only named it in passing, after a church in Spain. He could not have known that he would have so many things to name, and I imagined how hard he had to rack his brain after he ran out of names honoring his benefactors, the saints he cherished, events important to him. A task like that would have killed a thoughtful person, but he went on to live a very long life.

I had realized that the origin of my presence on the island—my ancestral history—was the result of a foul deed; but that was not what made me, at fourteen or so, stand up in school choir practice and say that I did not wish to sing "Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves; / Britons never will be slaves," that I was not a Briton and that until not too long ago I would have been a slave. My action did not create a scandal; instead, my choir mistress only wondered if all their efforts to civilize me over the years would come to nothing in the end. At the time, my reasons were quite straightforward: I disliked the descendants of the Britons for being unbeautiful, for not cooking food well, for wearing ugly clothes, for not liking to really dance, and for not liking real music. If only we had been ruled by the French: they were prettier, much happier in appearance, so much more the kind of people I would have enjoyed being around. I once had a pen pal on a neighboring island, a French island, and even though I could see her island from mine, when we sent correspondence to each other it had to go to the ruler country, thousands of miles away, before reaching its destination. The stamps on her letter were always cancelled with the French words for liberty, equality, and fraternity; on mine were no such words, only the image of a stony-face, sour-mouth woman. I understand the situation better now; I understand that, in spite of those words, my pen pal and I were in the same boat; but still I think those words have a better ring to them than the image of a stony-face, sour-mouth woman.

One day I was a child and then I was not. Everyone told me this: You are no longer a child. I had started to menstruate, I grew breasts, tufts of hair appeared under my arms and between my legs. I grew taller all of a sudden, and it was hard to manage so much new height all at once. One day I was living silently in a personal hell, without anyone to tell what I felt, without even knowing that the feelings I had were possible to have; and then one day I was not living like that at all. I had begun to see the past like this: there is a line; you can draw it yourself, or sometimes it gets drawn for you; either way, there it is, your past, a collection of people



THE FIRST MODULAR-PHONE IMPLANT GARNERS ENVIOUS LOOKS ALONG FIFTH AVENUE you used to be and things you used to do. Your past is the person you no longer are, the situations you are no longer in.

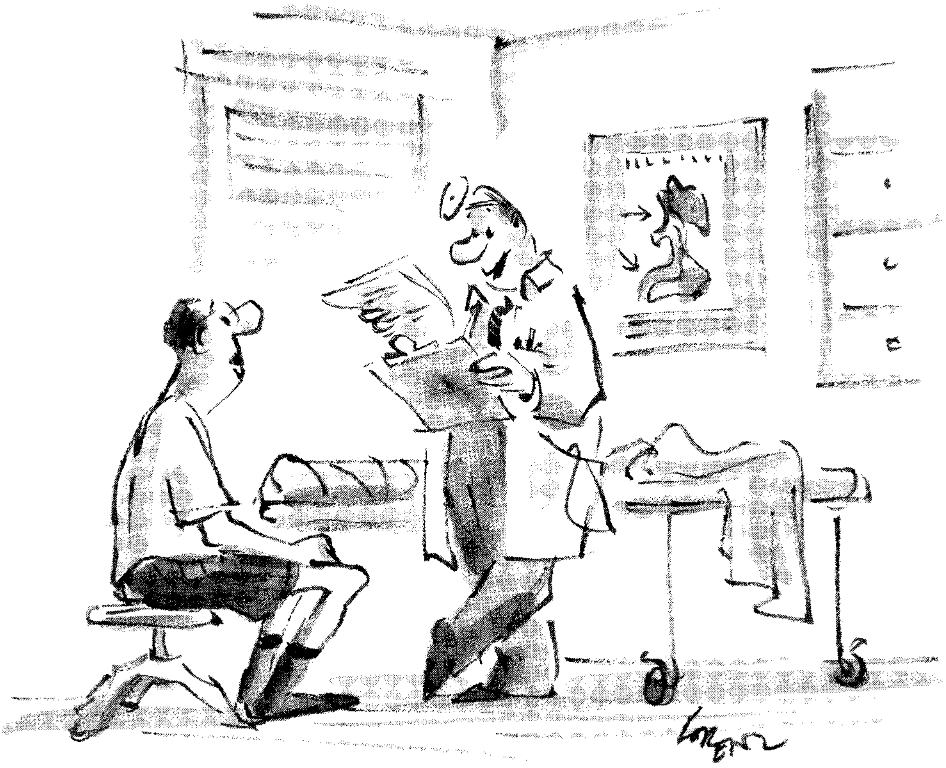
I USED to be nineteen; I used to live in the household of Lewis and Mariah, and I used to be the girl who took care of their four children; I used to stand over the children, four girls, at the street corner, waiting for the stoplight to change color; I used to sit on a lakeshore with them; I used to sit in the kitchen, with the inevitable sun streaming through the window, with Mariah, drinking coffee she learned to make in France, and trying to explain to myself, by speaking to Mariah, how I got to feel the way I even now feel; I used to see Mariah with happiness an essential part of her daily existence, and then, when the perfect world she had known for so long vanished without warning, I saw sadness replace it; I used to lie naked in moonlight with a boy named Hugh; I used to not know who Lewis was, until one day he revealed himself to be just another man, an ordinary man, when I saw him in love with his wife's best friend; I used to be that person, and I used to be in those situations. That was how I had spent the year just past.

One day I was living in the large apartment of Lewis and Mariah (without Lewis, of course, for he had gone to live somewhere else all by himself, allowing a decent amount of time to pass before he gave Mariah the surprise of her life: he had fallen out of love with her because he had fallen in love with her best friend, Dinah), and the next day I was not.

My leaving began on the night I heard my father had died. When I had left my parents, I had said to myself that I never wanted to see them again. These were words said in the way of a child; for a child might want someone dead, might even wish to do the deed herself, but would want the dead person to get up and carry on as before, only without the thing that made the child wish for the death in the first place. I had wished never to see my father again, and my wish had become true: I would never see my father again. I wondered how he looked in the coffin; I wondered who had made the coffin and if it was made of pine or mahogany; I wondered if he had been buried in his blue serge suit, the one he always saved for the special occasion that never seemed to come—perhaps my mother would have thought his burial was the special occasion. I had never imagined my father dying. I had never imagined my parents dying. When I told Mariah this, she said that no one ever thinks their parents will die, ever, and I had to suppress the annoyance I felt at her for once again telling me about everybody when I told her something about myself. Mariah said that I was feeling guilty. Guilty! I had always thought that was a judgment passed on you by others, and so it was new to me that it could be a judgment you pass on yourself. Guilty! But I did not feel like a murderer; I felt like Lucifer, doomed to build wrong upon wrong.

I had not been opening the letters my mother had been sending to me for months. In them she tried to give me a blow-by-blow description of how quickly the quality of her life had deteriorated since I had left her, but I only knew this afterward—after I had learned of my father's death, written to her and sent her money, and then opened the letter she sent in reply. For if I had seen those letters sooner, one way or another I would have died. I would have died if I did nothing; I would have died if I did something. I then made a last reply to her, though she did not know she might never hear from me again. I told her that I would come home soon, and how sorry I was for everything that had happened to her. I did not say that I loved her. I could not say that. I then told her that the family I was living with (Lewis and Mariah) were moving to another part of town; the address I gave her was one I made up off the top of my head. The moment I did that was the moment I knew I would soon make living with Lewis and Mariah the past.

After that the days went by too slowly and too quickly: I could not wait to put this period of my life behind me, and each moment felt like a ball of lead; at the same time, I wanted to understand everything that was happening to me, and each day felt like a minute. It was gloomy inside the house, and gloomy outside, too. "The holidays are coming," Mariah said. "The holidays are coming." She should have been happy, but she said it as if she were expecting a funeral. The skies were hard and gray; it rained, and the rain felt like small, hard nails; the sun shone



"First of all, let me say yes, you are getting enough kelp."

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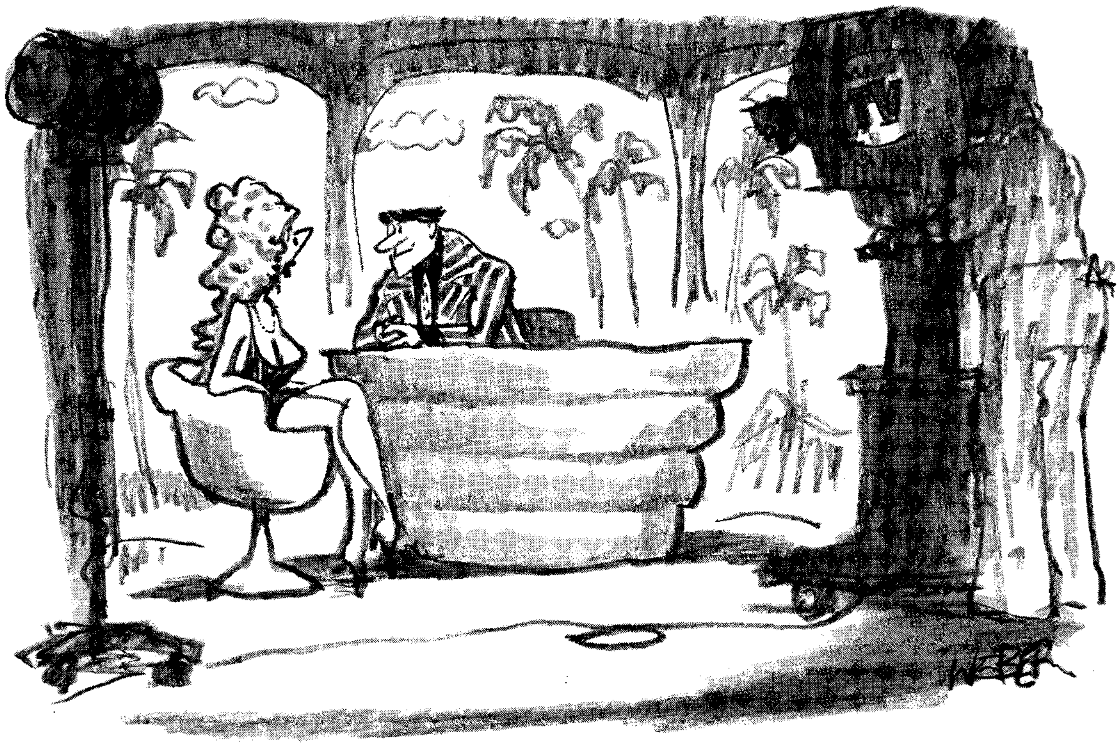
sometimes, but weakly, as if it held a grudge. I noticed how hard and cold and shut up tight the ground was. I noticed this because I used to wish it would just open up and take me in, I felt so bad. If I dropped dead from despair as I was crossing the street, I would just have to lie there in the cold. The ground would refuse me. To die in the cold was more than I could bear. I wanted to die in a hot place. The only hot place I knew was my home. I could not go home, and so I could not die yet.

When I told Mariah that I was leaving, she said, "It's not a year yet. You are supposed to stay for at least a year." Her voice was full of anger, but I ignored it. It's always hard for the person who is left behind. And even as she said it she must have known how hollow it sounded, for it was only a matter of weeks before it would be a year since I had come to live with her. The reality of her situation was now clear to her: she was a woman whose husband had betrayed her. I wanted to say this to her: "Your situation is an everyday thing. Men behave in this way all the time. The ones who do not behave in this way are the exceptions to the rule." But I knew what her response would have been. She would have said, "What a cliché." She would have said, "What do you know about these things?" And she would have been right; it was a cliché, and I had no personal experience of a thing like that. But all the same, where I came from every woman knew this cliché, and a man like Lewis would not have been a surprise; his behavior would not have cast a pall over any woman's life. It was expected. Everybody knew that men have no morals, that they do not know how to behave, that they do not know how to treat other people. It was why men like laws so much; it was why they had to invent such things—they need a guide. When they are not sure what to do, they consult this guide. If the guide gives them advice they don't like, they change the guide. This was something I knew; why didn't Mariah know it, also? And if I were to tell it to her she would only show me a book she had somewhere which contradicted everything I said—a book most likely written by a woman who understood absolutely nothing.

The holidays came, and they did feel like a funeral, for so many things had died. For the children's sake, she and Lewis put up a good front. He came and went, doing all the things he would have done if he were still living with them. He bought the fir tree, bought the children the presents they wanted, bought Mariah a coat made up from the skins of small pesty animals who lived in the ground. She, of course, hated it, but for appearances' sake kept her opinion to herself. He must have forgotten that she was not the sort of person who would wear the skin of another being if she could help it. Or perhaps in the rush of things he gave his old love his new love's present. Mariah gave me a necklace made up of pretty porcelain beads and small polished balls of wood. She said it was the handiwork of someone in Africa. It was the most beautiful thing anyone had ever given me.

The New Year came, and I was going somewhere new again. I gathered my things together; I had a lot more than when I first came. I had new clothes, all better suited to this new climate I now lived in. I had a camera and prints of the photographs I had taken, prints I had made myself. But mostly I had books—so many books, and they were mine; I would not have to part with them. It had always been a dream of mine to just own a lot of books, to never part with a book once I had read it. So there they were, resting nicely in small boxes—my own books, the books that I had read. Mariah spoke to me harshly all the time now, and she began to make up rules which she insisted that I follow; and I did, for after all what else could she do? It was a last resort for her—insisting that I be the servant and she the master. She used to insist that we be friends, but that had apparently not worked out very well, for now I was leaving. The master business did not become her at all, and it made me sad to see her that way. Still, it made me remember what my mother had said to me many times: for my whole life I should make sure the roof over my head was my own; such a thing was important, especially if you were a woman.

On the day I actually left, there was no sun; the sky had shut it out tightly. It was a Saturday. Lewis had taken the children to eat snails at a French restaurant. All



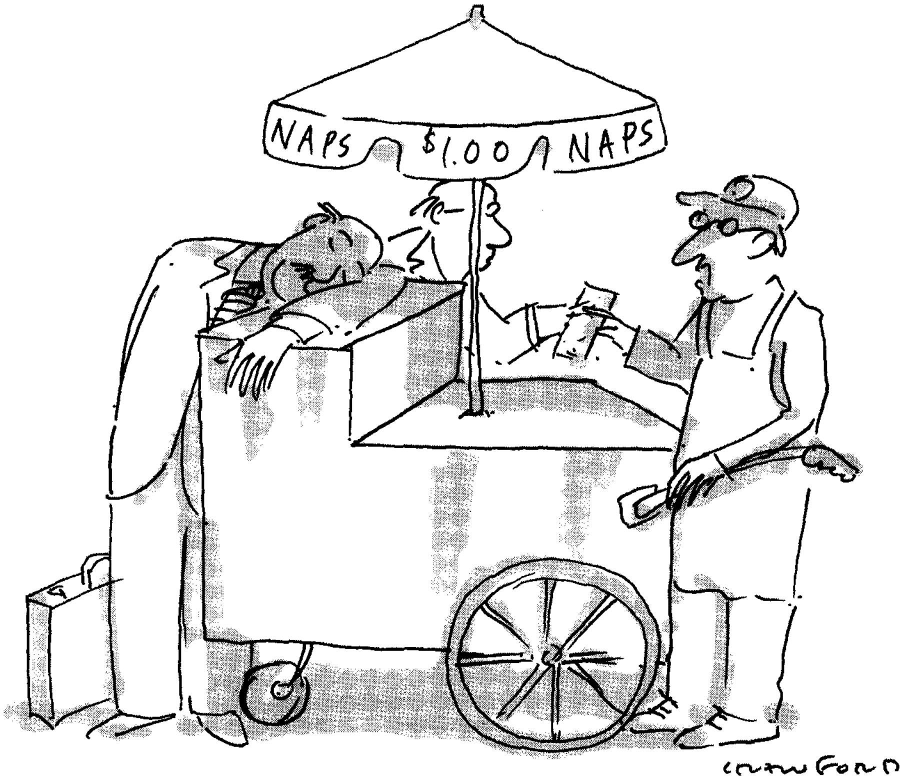
"Here's what I want to say, Tony: You, me, everybody in our industry can make a difference. There, I've said it."

four of them liked such things—and just as well, for that went with the life they were expected to lead eventually. Mariah helped me put my things in a taxi. It was a cold goodbye on her part. Her voice and her face were stony. She did not hug me. I did not take any of this personally; someday we would be friends again. I was numb, but it was from not knowing just what this new life would hold for me.

THE next day I woke up in a new bed, and it was my own. I had bought it with my money. The roof over my head was my own—that is, as long as I could afford to pay the rent for it. The curtains at my windows had loud, showy flowers printed on them; I had chosen this pattern over a calico that the lady in the cloth store had recommended. It did look vulgar in this climate, but it would have been just right in the climate I came from. Through the curtains I could see that the day was just like the one before: gray, the sky shut up tight, the sun locked out. I knew then that even though I would always notice the absence or presence of the sun, even though I would always prefer a sunny day to a day without sun, I would get used to it; I wouldn't make an important decision based on the weather.

It was Peggy who had found the apartment. We were then still best friends. We had nothing in common except that we felt at ease in each other's company. From the moment we met we had recognized in each other the same restlessness, the same dissatisfaction with our surroundings, the same skin-doesn't-fit-ness. That was as far as it went. We had accepted each other's shortcomings and differences; then, just when we began to feel the yoke of each other's companionship, just when we began to feel the beginnings of what might eventually lead to lifelong loathing, we decided to move in together. It could have been worse. People marry at times like that; they then have ten children, live under the same roof for years and years, eventually die and arrange to be buried side by side. We only signed our names to a two-year lease.

It was a Sunday. I could hear church bells ringing. I had not been to church in over a year—not since leaving home. I supposed I still believed in God; after all, what choice did I have? I could not ask God what to do, since the answer, I was sure, would not suit me. I could do what suited me now, as long as I could pay for it. "As long as I could pay for it." That phrase soon became the tail that wagged my dog. If I had died then, it should have been my epitaph.



"O.K., Bud! Time's up!"

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Peggy, who had been living with her parents all along, decided not to do so anymore. She said that she was sick of them. She said it as if her parents were a style of dressing she had outgrown. I had never heard anyone speak of their parents in this way; I never even knew you could make them seem trivial, trinketlike, mere pests. I was not sure whether to admire her or feel sorry for her because she hadn't got parents whose personalities were on a larger scale, parents whose presence you are reminded of with each breath you take. Someone had told Peggy about this vacancy; it had two bedrooms, a sitting room, a kitchen, and a bathroom. I had spent my entire life not knowing the luxury of plumbing, hot and cold tap water, the privacy to be had by closing the door and taking off your clothes and stepping into a bathtub and staying there for as long as it pleased you. I could very well have gone through my entire life without knowledge of such things, and on my list of unhappinesses this would not have made an appearance. But not so anymore. When I saw that the apartment had only one bathroom, I made note of it with disappointment. At Mariah and Lewis's house I had my own bathroom, and my smells were known only to me. Here the windows in the back had bars—not the decorative kind to keep children from falling out, but the crisscross kind to keep people who meant us no good from coming in; the windows in the front allowed the sun, when it shone, to come in plenty. I used to lie in my bed at home, surrounded by all the things they say make for a contented life—a loving family, a safe full of food, harmonious surroundings—and not feel contented. I longed then to live in a place like this: bars on the windows to keep out people who might wish to do me harm, an unfriendly climate, uncertainty at every turn. History is full of great events; when the great events are said and done, there will always be someone, a little person, unhappy, dissatisfied, discontented, feeling not at home in her own skin, ready to stir up a whole new set of great events again. I was not such a person, able to put in motion a set of great events, but I understood the phenomenon all the same.

There were many Sundays when I wished I could just lie in bed and not get up for anything, especially not for church. It was a Sunday, I was lying in bed, I would get up only if I wished to. On the wall in front of me was a photograph I had taken of a body of water, the lake where I had spent the summer; there was nothing in the picture—there were no boats, no people, no signs of life—except the water, its surface of uniformly shaped ripplets, its depths dark, treacherous, and uninviting. It was the opposite of the water I was surrounded by on the island where I grew up. That water was three shades of blue, calm, inviting, warm. I took it for granted, so much so that it became one of the things I cursed.

Mariah had given me a small desk with many drawers. I had placed it near my bed, with a lamp on it. I reached into the top drawer and retrieved a small stack of official documents: my passport, my immigration card, my permission-to-work card, my birth certificate, and a copy of the lease to the apartment. These documents showed everything about me, and yet they showed nothing about me. They showed where I was born. They showed that I was born on the twenty-fifth of May, 1949. They showed how tall I was. They showed that my skin and my eyes were the same color, brown, though they did not say if the shades were identical. These documents all said that my name was Lucy—Lucy Josephine Warner. I used to hate all three of those names. I was named Josephine after my mother's uncle Mr. Joseph, because he was rich, from money he had made in sugar in Cuba, and it was thought that he would remember the honor and leave something for me in his will. But when he died it was discovered that he had lost his fortune a while before and did not even have a roof over his head; he had been living in an old tomb in the Anglican churchyard. The "Warner" must have come from the Englishman who owned my ancestors when they were slaves; no one really knew, and I could hardly blame them for not caring to find out. The "Lucy" was the only part of my name that I would have cared to hold on to. When I had first begun to think of the significance of my three names, I disliked the name Lucy, because it seemed slight, without substance, not at all the person I thought I would like to be even then. In my own mind, I called myself other names: Emily, Charlotte, Jane. They were the names of the authoresses whose books I loved. I eventually settled on the name Enid, after the authoress Enid Blyton, because that name seemed the most unusual of all the names I thought of. One day when it was firm in my mind that the name Enid was the name I wanted to be known by, I told my mother. I said, "I do not like my name, Lucy. I want to change it to Enid. I like that name better." The moment I said this, she immediately turned a dark color, the color of boiling blood. She turned toward me, and she was no longer my mother—she was a ball of fury, large, like a god. I wondered then, for the millionth time, how it came to be that of all the mothers in the world mine was not an ordinary human being but something from an ancient book. Not long after that I learned, through my usual habit of eavesdropping on conversations between my mother and her friends, that a woman with whom my father had a child and who had tried to kill my mother and me through Obeah was named Enid. I had never heard of that Enid before. When the mystery of my mother's behavior became clear to me, I felt ashamed of the mistake I had made. Even to hurt my mother I would not have wanted the same name as the woman who had tried to kill my mother and me.

Much later, when I no longer cared how I made her feel, I brought up the question of my name again. My mother was stooped over a bowl of fish, cleaning and seasoning them in preparation for our supper. She was pregnant with the last of her children. She did not want to be pregnant and three times had tried to throw away the child, but all her methods had failed, and she remained pregnant. An old brown-and-white dog had become attached to her. We didn't know where the dog had came from—only that whenever my mother left our house it was always waiting outside and would follow only her. She did not like animals; where she came from, sometimes when someone wanted to harm someone else they sent the harm in the shape of an animal. When she saw the dog follow her around, she was sure it was something bad, and so she tried everything to get rid of it, but the dog would not go away. She stopped trying to get rid of the dog the day she realized that the

SKIN CANCER

Balmy overcast nights of mid-September;
Palms standing out in street light, house light;
Full moon penetrating the cloud film
With an explosive halo, a ring almost half the sky;
Air like a towel draped over shoulders;
Lightness or gravity deferred like a moral question;
The incense in the house lit; the young people
Moving from the front door into the half dark
And back, or up the stairs to glimpse the lovers' shoes
Outside the master bedroom; the youngest speculating;
The taste of beer, familiar as salt water;
Each window holding a sea view, charcoal
With shifting bars of white; the fog filling in
Like the haze of distance itself pushing close, blurring.

As if the passage into life were through such houses,
Surrounded by some version of ocean weather,
Lit beads of fog or wind so stripped it burns the throat;
Mildew-spreading, spray-laden breezes and the beach sun
Making each grain of stucco cast a shadow;
An ideal landscape sheared of its nostalgia;
S. with his black hair, buck teeth, unsunned skin,
Joking and disappearing; F. doing exactly the same

• •

But dying, a corkscrew motion through green water;
And C. not looking back from the car door,
Reappearing beside the East River, rich, owned, smiling at last.

Swains and nymphs. And news that came with the sea damp,
Of steady pipe corrosions, black corners,
Moisture working through sandlots, through slab floors,
Slowly, with chemical, with molecular intricacy,
Then bursting alive: the shrieked confessions
Of the wild parents; the cliff collapse; the kidnap;
The cache of photos; the letter; the weapon; the haunted dream;
The sudden closeup of the loved one's degradation.

Weather a part of it all, permeating and sanctifying,
Infiltering and destroying; the sun disk,
Cool behind the veil of afternoon cloud,
With sunspots like flies crawling across it;
The slow empurpling of skin all summer;
The glorious learned flesh and the rich pallor
Of the untouched places in the first nakedness;
The working of the lesion now in late life,
Soon to be known by the body, even the one
Enduring the bareness of the inland plains,
The cold fronts out of Canada, a sickness
For home that feels no different from health.

—MARK JARMAN

• •

dog was pregnant also. It was funny to see them walking down the street together—two female beings, a human and a dog, both of them pregnant. They went everywhere together, and they grew to look alike: thin, shrivelled, undernourished (my mother had no appetite), unmaternal. They both became bad-tempered and would snarl at anyone who did anything they found offensive. As my mother was cleaning the fish, the dog was standing nearby, snapping at flies that were bothering her. They made such a picture: the dead fish, the flies, the pregnant woman, the pregnant dog.

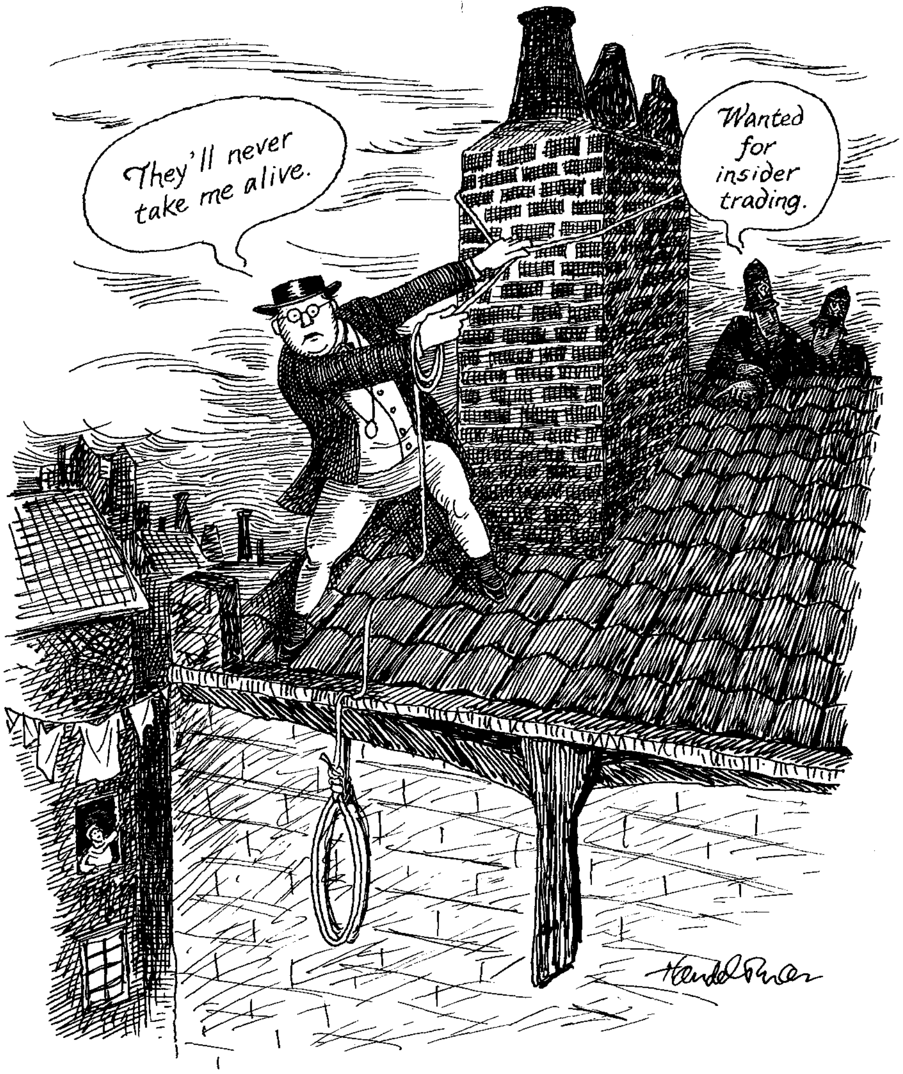
It was this sight that was before me when I asked my mother why she had named me Lucy. The first time I asked, she made no reply, pretending that she had not heard me. I asked again, and this time under her breath she said, "I named you after Satan himself. Lucy, short for Lucifer. What a botheration from the moment you were conceived." I not only heard it quite clearly when she said it but I heard the words before they came out of her mouth. And yet I said, "What did you say?" But she wouldn't repeat it; she only said, "Why do you torment me so?" and wouldn't speak to me anymore. In the minute or so it took for all of this to transpire, I went from feeling burdened and old and tired to feeling light, new, clean. I was transformed from failure to triumph. It was the moment I knew who I was. When I was quite young and just being taught to read, the books I was taught to read from were the Bible, "Paradise Lost," and some plays by William Shakespeare. I knew well the book of Genesis, and from time to time I had been made to memorize parts of "Paradise Lost." The stories of the fallen were well known to me, but I had not known that my own situation could even distantly be related to them. Lucy, a girl's name for Lucifer. That my mother would have found me devil-like did not surprise me, for I often thought of her as godlike, and are not the children of gods devils? I did not grow to like the name Lucy—I would have much preferred to be called Lucifer outright—but whenever I saw my name I always reached out to give it a strong embrace.

I GOT out of bed and stood on an old rug Mariah had given me. I wanted to stretch my arms up and out, but the room was cold, so I hugged myself. I walked through the apartment. Peggy was still asleep in her room; I could hear her snoring through her closed door. She had once gone to church every Sunday morning with her parents, and now said she would never do that again. In the bathroom I looked at my face in the mirror. I was twenty years old—not a long time to be alive—and yet there was not an ounce of innocence on my face. If I did not know everything yet, I would not be afraid to know *everything* as it came up. That life might be cold and hard would not surprise me.

I went to stare out the front window. When I looked down, I could see people, not as many as on a weekday, bustling about. I could see the roofs of other buildings far away. I could not see any trees. Everything I could see looked unreal to me; everything I could see made me feel I would never be part of it, never penetrate to the inside, never be taken in. A building across the way had a tower with a clock. I stared at the clock for a long time before I realized that it was broken, and it made me even more conscious of a feeling I had constantly now: my sense of time had changed, and I did not know if the day went by too quickly or too slowly.

Peggy came to look out the window, too. Was she seeing the same things as we looked out on the same view? Probably not. In the less than twenty-four hours we had been together under the same roof, our differences had been piling up. She preferred food that came in a tin, or already prepared, to food she had to cook herself. In general, she preferred having things done for her. She did not even know how to sew on a button. As she stood next to me at the window, she smelled of cigarettes and old food; she had not yet taken a bath or brushed her teeth. She rested her head on my shoulder and said, "Can you believe this? Can you believe we did it?" Her hair smelled of lemons—not real lemons, not lemons as I knew them to smell, not the sort of lemons that grew in my yard at home, but artificial lemons, made up in a laboratory. Peggy did not know what a real lemon smelled like. How am I going to get out of this?—the thought was welling up inside me, but I quickly placed a big rock on top of it. She lit a cigarette; I wished she had not done that. She wanted to make us cups of instant coffee, but I made us coffee with steaming hot milk, the way Mariah had shown me. The afternoon passed. For a very long moment, I wondered what my mother was doing just then, and I saw her face; it

ALTERNATIVE DICKENS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was the face she used to have when she loved me without reservation.

Early that evening, Paul came by to see the apartment for the first time and to take us out to dinner. He brought us a large bouquet of small yellow roses, and he gave me a photograph he had taken of me standing over a boiling pot of food. In the picture I was naked from the waist up; a piece of cloth, wrapped around me, covered me from the waist down. That was the moment he got the idea he possessed me in a certain way, and that was the moment I grew tired of him. I had been singing a song out loud. The words were: "Your crazy, crazy love / Is what I am dreaming of." He thought I was in a certain state of mind, having to do only with him. But it was just a song I was singing; I meant nothing at all. He kissed me now in that possessive way, lingering over my mouth, pressing my whole body into his; and though I was not unmoved, it was not as special as he believed. I knew him better than he realized. He loved ruins; he loved the past but only if it had ended on a sad note, from a lofty beginning to a gradual, rotten decline; he loved things that came from far away and had a mysterious history. I could have told him that I had sized him up, but it was not as if he were going to matter to me for years and years to come. He took us to a restaurant where they served macaroni in many sizes and shapes and with all sorts of sauces, only it wasn't called macaroni but a name foreign to me, and so I felt false saying it that way. We went back to the apartment, and I realized when I crossed the threshold that I did not think of it as home, only as the place where I now lived. Paul stayed in my bed with me. I had never had a man stay with me in my own bed. If I had imagined that such a thing would be a desirable landmark, it meant not much to me now; I only made a note of it.

ON that Monday I started a new job. When I told Mariah that I was leaving, I did not know what I would do. In fact there was nothing I could really do. I had no experience, except being a student and a nursemaid. But I was not afraid. Somehow I was not afraid. Paul knew a man who was a photographer; he took pictures of food and other things with life no longer in them, and the photographs were sold to magazines. He said he would pay me a salary for answering his telephone, *taking messages, answering correspondence*, and running errands. It was a small salary, but I was grateful all the same. Peggy had been preparing me for the world of employee-employer relationships. She had shown me how to behave when applying for a job, how to show the proper amount of respect, submission, eagerness to please, even though in my heart I would not mean any of those things; she said that as soon as I had the job and was safely in it, I could let my real personality come out. I was not opposed to deception, but I would have preferred not to start out that way.

That Monday morning was like many to come, as the rest of the day was like many to come also. Peggy and I silently made our arrangements for time in the bathroom, time in front of the full-length mirror in the passageway, time in the kitchen preparing our breakfasts. At the corner, she hugged me, kissed my cheek, and wished me good luck. Something in that moment, something buried underneath, made tears come to our eyes, but before they could spill out we turned and went our separate ways. I walked along the streets, trying to hold my head up and observe everything, wanting to remember how everything looked and felt, but I knew even then that the things that would stick in my mind later on were not the things my eyes were fixed on. I got to my job, I said good morning to everyone, I sat at my desk. I was now living a life I had always wanted to live. I was living apart from my family in a place where no one knew much about me; almost no one knew even my name, and I was free more or

MID OHIO. GTO. JUNE 1990. HEARTLAND. GTO. MAY 1990. DAYTONA 24 HOURS. GTU. FEBRUARY 1990. MIAMI. GTU. MARCH 1989. DAYTONA 24 HOURS. GTU. FEBRUARY 1989. SEBRING 12 HOURS. GTU. MARCH 1988. DAYTONA 24 HOURS. GTU. JANUARY 1988. COLUMBUS. GTU. OCTOBER 1987. WATKINS GLEN. GTU. SEPTEMBER 1987. LIME ROCK. GTU. SEPTEMBER 1987. ROAD AMERICA. GTU. AUGUST 1987. SUMMIT POINT. GTU. JULY 1987. FIREBIRD. GTU. MAY 1987. LAGUNA SECA. GTU. MAY 1987. RIVERSIDE. GTU. APRIL 1987. SEBRING 12 HOURS. GTU. MARCH 1987. MIAMI. GTU. MARCH 1987. DAYTONA 24 HOURS. GTU. FEBRUARY 1987. DAYTONA. GTU. OCTOBER 1986. COLUMBUS. GTU. OCTOBER 1986. WATKINS GLEN. GTU. SEPTEMBER 1986. LIME ROCK. GTU. SEPTEMBER 1986. ROAD AMERICA. GTU. AUGUST 1986. SEARS POINT. GTU. AUGUST 1986. WATKINS GLEN. GTU. JULY 1986. WEST PALM. GTU. JUNE 1986. CHARLOTTE. GTU. MAY 1986. LAGUNA SECA. GTU. MAY 1986. RIVERSIDE. GTU. APRIL 1986. SEBRING 12 HOURS. GTU. MARCH 1986.

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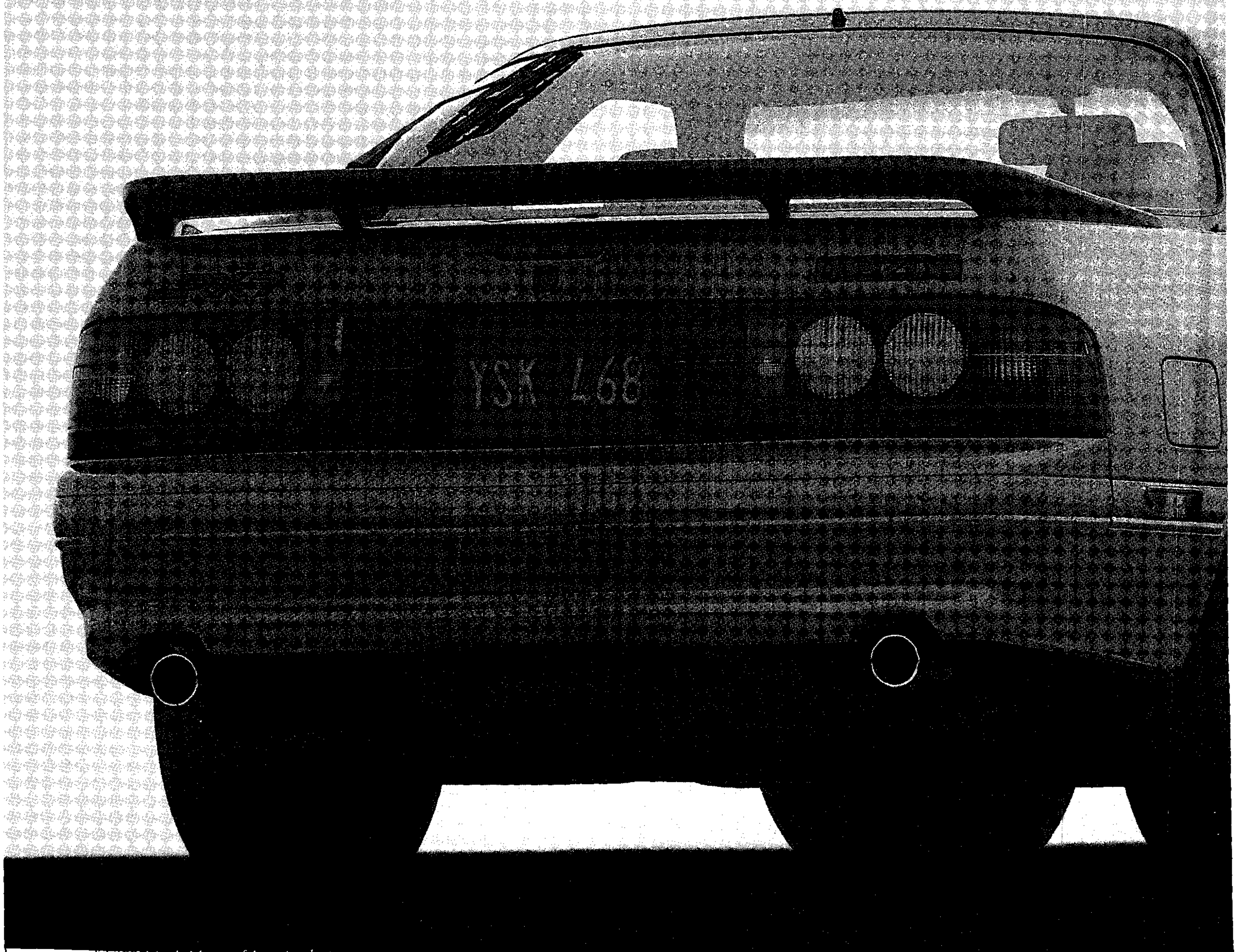

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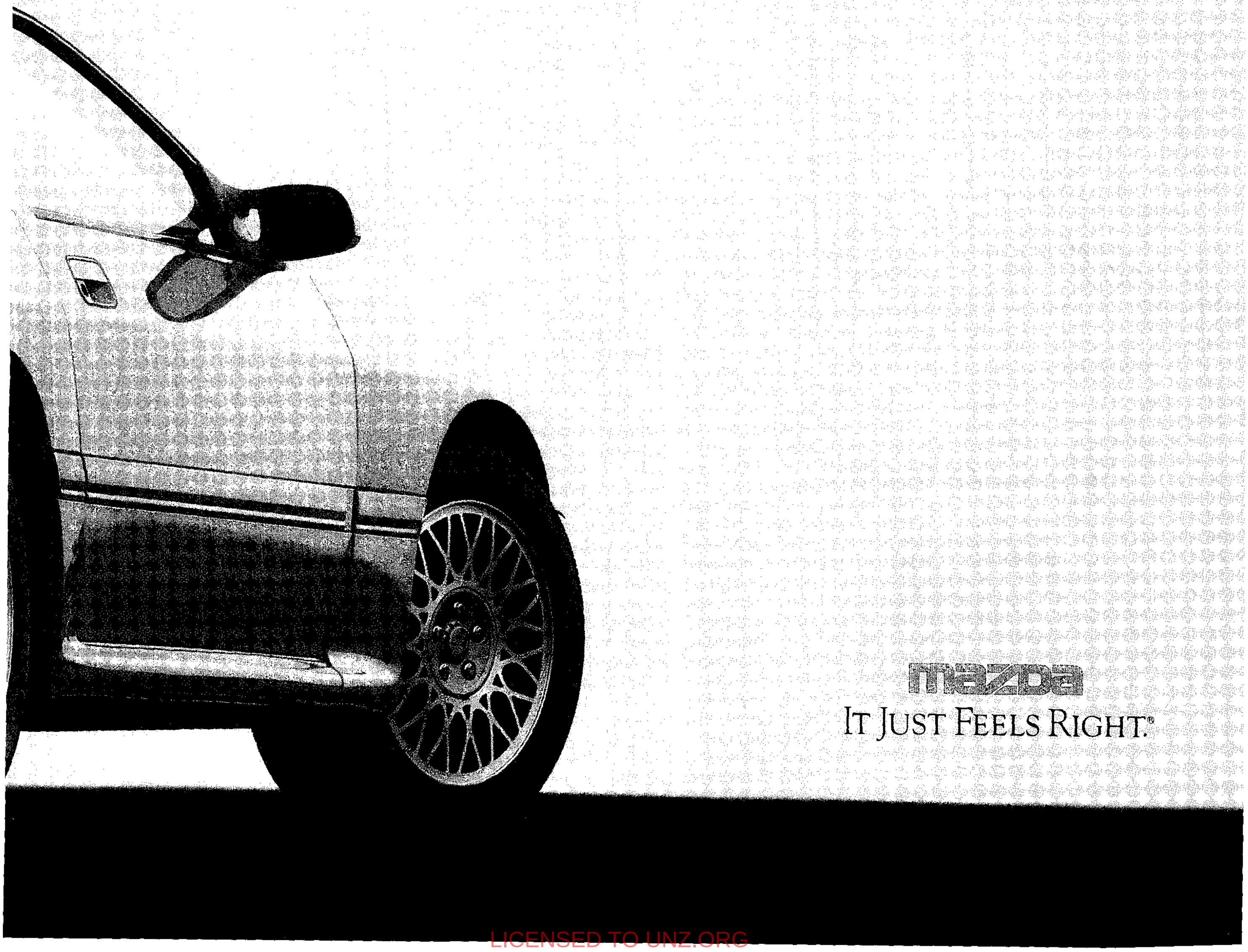

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less to come and go as pleased me. The feeling of bliss, the feeling of happiness, the feeling of longing fulfilled that I had thought would come with this situation was nowhere to be found inside me.

The man I worked for was named Timothy Simon. I called him Mr. Simon, not Tim, or even Timothy, as he begged me to do; this made him not call me "honey," or "darling," the two endearments he used when addressing any woman. He was a friend of my friends, he said, and so he and I should be friends also. But I did not know men very well then; the things I did know about them were not so very good. Friendship is a simple thing, and yet complicated; friendship is on the surface, something natural, something taken for granted, and yet underneath one could find worlds. We did not become friends, but he interested me all the same. For he was the first person I met who had deeply compromised himself. He did not want to be in a studio taking photographs of things with the life gone out of them; he had wanted to roam the world taking photographs of people who had suffered horribly and through no fault of their own. But the market for the work he really wanted to do was limited, he said, and this work that he did paid the bills. After he had said the word "bills" he pressed his lips together into the kind of smile that is not a smile at all but a way of warding off further inquiry.

Each morning I got up and had a breakfast that was becoming flimsier and flimsier; eventually it amounted to just a cup of tea. Peggy and I walked together as far as the corner and then parted, she heading north, I south. At the studio I performed my chores, some of them better than others; my typing skills, for instance, did not exist, but everyone agreed that I answered the phone better than it had ever been answered before. I took up the custom of drinking coffee all the time, though it tasted more like soiled water than the coffee I was used to. I ate lunches of cold moist food, sandwiches, or something that was a combination of gelatine and soured milk; I was sure none of it was good for me, and I liked that.

Mr. Simon allowed me to develop film in his darkroom when he was not using it. I did this in my own time. I had continued to take photographs, but I had no idea why. I even put aside a small amount of the money I earned so that I could take a course at night at a nearby university, but it was not with any ideas about my life in mind—it was only that I enjoyed doing this. Sometimes I would stay late at night, working in the darkroom, trying to get right a print of something I had made a snapshot of. I mostly liked to take pictures of people walking on the street. They were not pictures of individuals, just scenes of people walking about, hurrying to somewhere. I did not know them, and I did not care to. I would try and try to make a print that made more beautiful the thing I thought I had seen, that would reveal to me some of the things I had not seen, but I did not succeed.

I would walk home alone at night, the air a little thicker, a little warmer than when I had first started on this new phase of my life, for the winter had gone away. At home Peggy was already in her robe, her hair washed and smelling of that false lemon scent. She washed her hair every night and then slept with it wet to get an effect she wanted the next morning. It was after the first time I had come home and met her like this that she had told me she hoped to go to school to study hairdressing and beauty secrets. The way she put it, though, I found very touching, for she made it sound as if she were really going into public service. I knew then that I could never discuss with her my printmaking difficulties. Sometimes Paul would be there waiting for me; he waited for me in my bed, because Peggy felt his presence encroached on her privacy. I knew just what she meant. His presence in my bed was often not what I wanted at all, but unless a final goodbye came from him I had had enough of partings just now.

I WAS alone in the world. It was not a small accomplishment. I thought I would die doing it. I was not happy, but that seemed too much to ask for. I had seen Mariah. She had asked me to come and have dinner with her. We were friends again; we said how much we missed each other's company. She looked even more thin than usual. She was alone, and she felt lonely. She lived with her four children, but children are not companions. She was going away, she said, far away, to live in a place of uncommon natural beauty. Everyone who lived in this place, she said, was filled with love and trust and greeted

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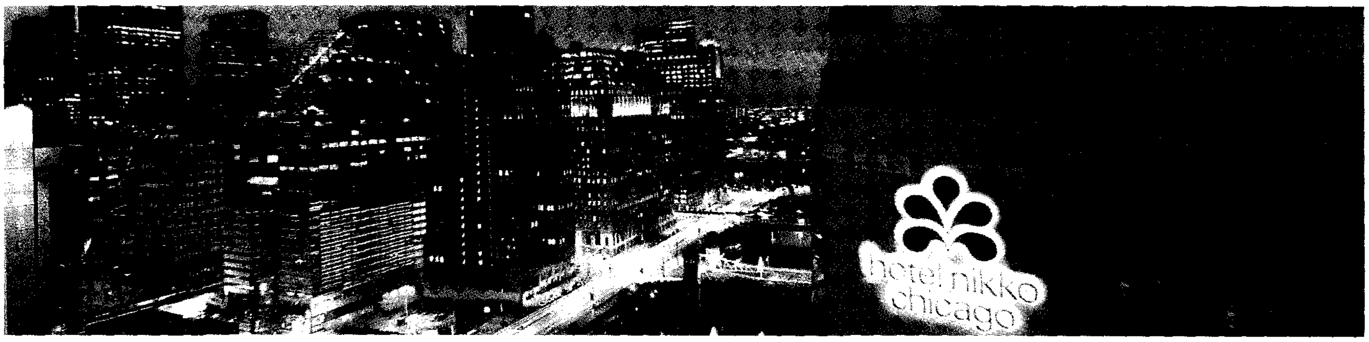

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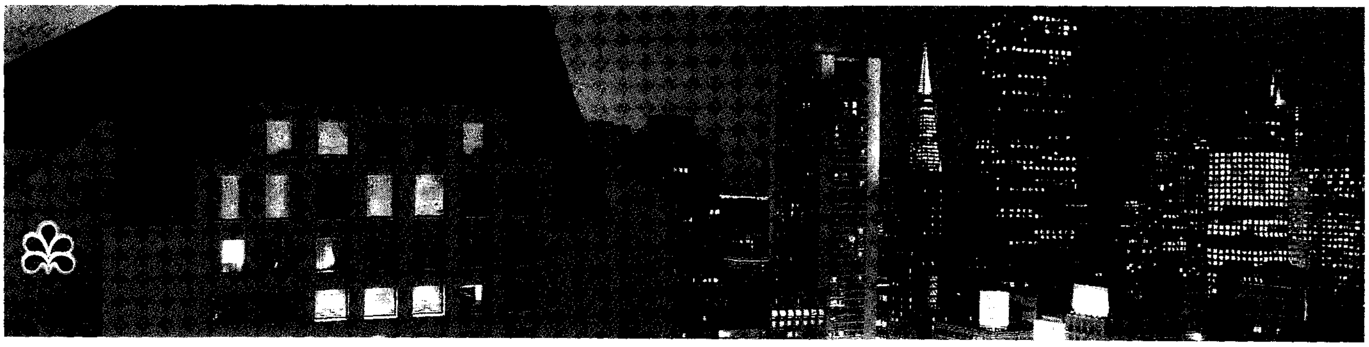

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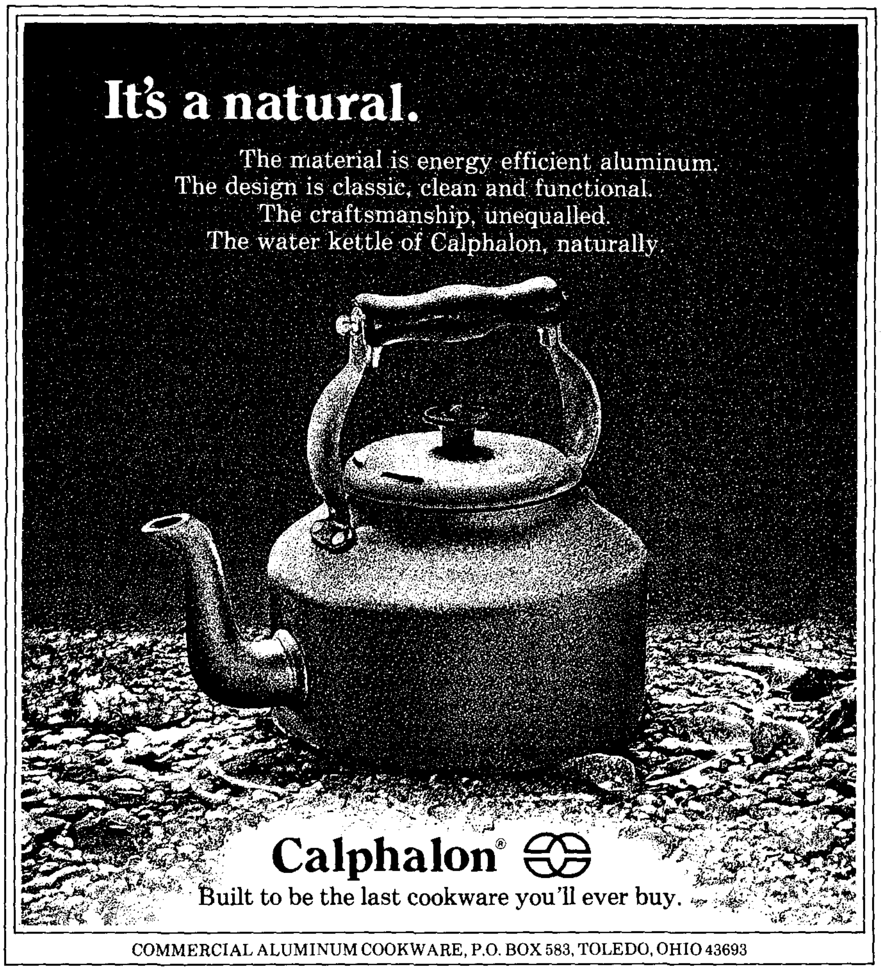
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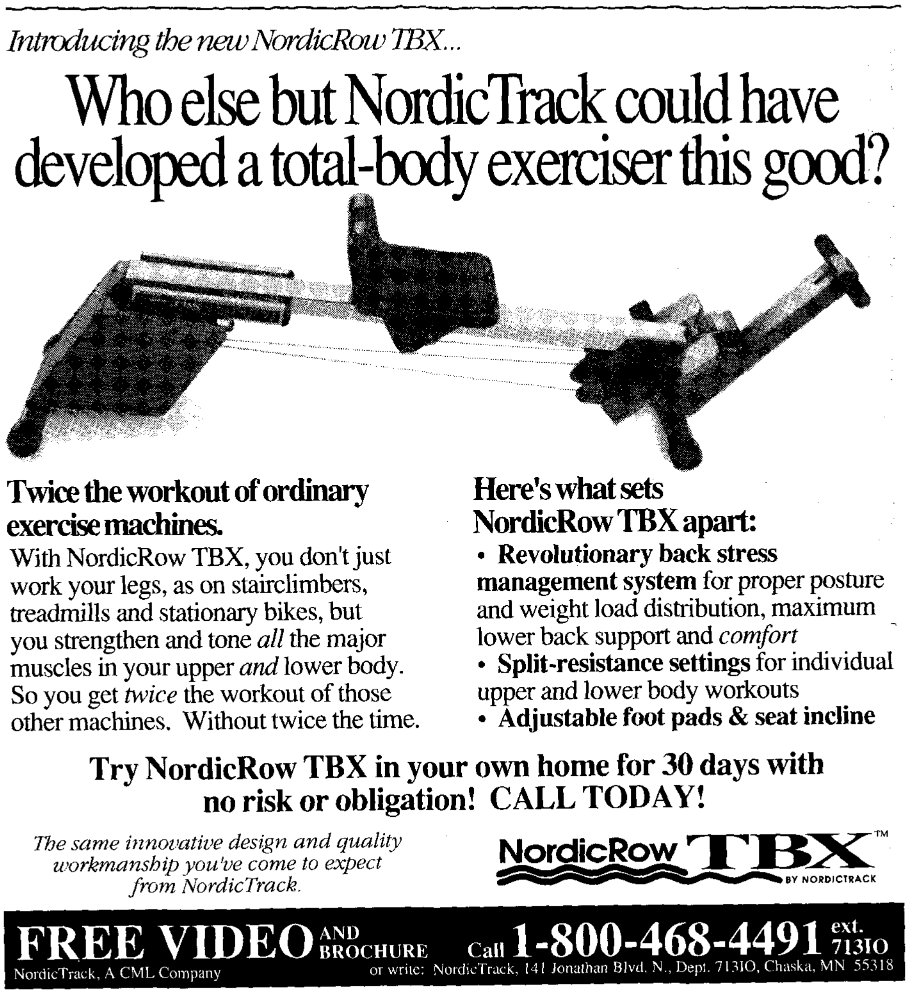
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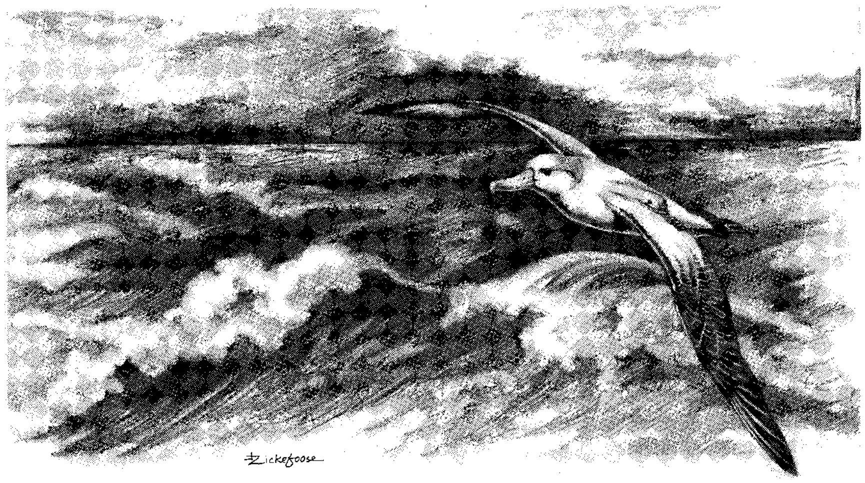
each other with the word "Peace." We sat on the floor and ate our food. Around us were some of the remains of her marriage: wine and water goblets made from crystal, china plates decorated with real gold around the edges, real silverware. She was giving all of this away, along with many other things from her married life. She told me to take anything I wanted, but I wanted nothing. I could not imagine living with any of it; everything she had reminded me, as it must have reminded her, too, of the weight of the world. As a present, she gave me a notebook she had bought in Italy a long time before. She found it while going through her old things. The cover was of leather, dyed blood red, and the pages were white and smooth, like milk. Around the time I was leaving her for the life I now led, I had said to her that from then on my life would be like a book of blank pages. As she gave me the book, she reminded me of that; and in the way so typical of her, the way that I had come to love, she spoke of women, journals, and, of course, history. When we said goodbye, I did not know if I would ever see her again.

I was alone at home one night. Peggy was on an outing by herself. Paul was on an outing by himself. I had noticed that this happened more and more; the two of them were busy at something, and I suspected it was with each other. I only hoped they would not get angry and disrupt my life when they realized I did not care. I did all sorts of little things: I washed my underwear, scrubbed the stove, washed the bathroom floor, trimmed my nails, arranged my dresser, made sure I had enough sanitary napkins. When I got into bed, I lay there with the light on for a long time doing nothing. Then I saw the book Mariah had given me. It was on the night table next to my bed. Beside it lay my fountain pen full of beautiful blue ink. I picked up both, and I opened the book. At the top of the page I wrote my full name: Lucy Josephine Warner. At the sight of it, many thoughts rushed through me, but I could only write down this: "I wish I could love someone so much that I would die from it." And then as I looked at this sentence a great wave of shame came over me and I wept and wept, so much that the tears fell on the page and caused all the words to become one great big blur.

—JAMAICA KINCAID

A REPORTER AT LARGE

ALBATROSSES



THE first time I heard the word "Torishima" was in the Antarctic, aboard a ship cruising through a garden of sparkling ice on its way to the bird-clotted cliffs of South Georgia. Peter Harrison, a painter and ornithologist, who has probably seen more species of seabirds than anyone else on earth, was delivering one of his ebullient lectures—this time on albatrosses, his favorite seabirds, some species of which we would soon be climbing tussock-covered hills to view. A slender, fair-haired man in his early forties, with the wiry build of a rock climber (seabirds often nest on cliffs), Harrison began in a whisper, with a sincerity suggesting someone accidentally overheard at his devotions: "The open ocean is to birds what space is to mankind—the last great frontier. For birds it poses the harshest, most unyielding environment on the face of the planet, an environment that covers nearly two-thirds of the world's surface. Yet it is possible even thousands of miles from land to go to the rail of a ship, look seaward, and find birds. But these are not ordinary birds—these are seabirds. And, of all the world's seabirds, there is one group that is a cut above the rest, one group that is peerless, one group that fills me with awe—a group of gentle giants. These are albatrosses. Their kingdom is not hillsides, forests, or meadows but an ever-changing seascape of blue, green, and white, whose moods are unpredictable. Over those vast tracts, albatrosses squeeze out a precarious and itinerant life. They are the ocean's nomads."

Speaking with a British accent lightly tempered by a variety of cultures encountered during many years at sea, Harrison went on to say that albatrosses, large, porcelain-like, and stately, are among the most beautiful birds. He had seen every species of albatross in the world except one, he told us, and that one was said to be the loveliest and the most startling: the short-tailed albatross, a nearly extinct bird with a tragic history, which breeds only on Torishima, a small, remote, storm-tossed Japanese island dominated by an active volcano. He had been trying to get there for ten years, he said, and at one point had managed to sail to within three hundred miles of Torishima, but weather and other circumstances had prevented him from landing. "Torishima"—he pronounced the island's name with his eyes closed. "To-ri-shima," he said again, with deep reverence and longing. Slides of albatrosses appeared in the darkness. As the island's name drifted across the room like an incantation, I thought of how miraculous and subtle the world's creatures are, and of how treacherous human beings can be to the animals we share the planet with.

The short-tailed albatross once clouded the skies from Japan to California, Harrison told us. It was the most abundant albatross in the North Pacific, and an important source of protein in the diet of Aleuts, Inuit, and North American Indians all along the West Coast. In barely a hundred years, plume hunters slaughtered almost every one of these birds. Just in the seventeen years between 1872 and 1889, five million were killed to stuff mattresses and quilts. And then, between the years 1975 and 1982, when the United States Fish and Wildlife Service surveyed fifteen thousand square kilometres of the Bering Sea, it found only one short-tailed albatross. In the nineteen-thirties, the world's known population of this once-plenteous bird had dropped to less than fifty; the short-tailed albatross had come closer to extinction than almost any animal on earth, and the survivors were still alive only because they had found a hiding place on Torishima, which was virtually inaccessible to human beings. In 1962, the Japanese government declared those rare short-tailed albatrosses a national monument—not the island they inhabited but the birds themselves. Now about four hundred of them exist, of which about a hundred pairs nest regularly on Torishima. Dramatic though the increase may seem, the species is hanging on by a thread, and, despite conservation efforts, may yet become extinct in our lifetime. What could be more important than to behold such creatures in their beauty and uniqueness? I knew I would have to go to Torishima. Harrison and I began planning our trip that evening.

Torishima (the name means "bird island") lies three hundred and fifty miles south of Tokyo, out in the storm-scoured Pacific. Visiting the island would mean getting special permission, since the Japanese government has declared it off-limits to visitors, in part to protect the birds but also because it is an active volcano: in 1902, an eruption killed a hundred and twenty-nine people. Our best hope, Harrison and I decided, was to join forces with Hiroshi Hasegawa, a Japanese ornithologist who has devoted his life to saving the short-tailed albatross, and, single-handed, brought their plight to the attention of the Japanese government. We would have to go in the typhoon season, which is when the birds are on the island, nesting. Apparently, the winds pick up savagely from the northwest in typhoon season, and the only break in the island's stone jaws is a small cove on its northwest corner. Torishima has no beach—just volcanic cliffs and sharp black boulders of frozen lava, against which a boat could be tossed and shattered—so we might have to swim ashore, though we would risk encountering sharks and jellyfish. Then we would have to begin climbing. Sitting in the boat-deck lounge as our ship dipped into the long steep swells of the Antarctic sea, Harrison and I grinned. It was irresistible. After all, it was his last albatross.

TEN months and many triangularly developed plans later, Peter Harrison and I fly to Tokyo to meet Hiroshi Hasegawa, who has by now become an epistolary friend. After passing through Immigration at Tokyo's International Airport, and listing our final destination in Japan as "Torishima Meteorological Station (abandoned)," we claim our luggage and make our way into the main terminal. The first people we see are a Japanese man in his early forties and a younger man and woman—Hiroshi and two graduate students—and they swoop down on us like benign falcons, introducing themselves first in the Japanese style, with bows, and then Western style, with handshakes. Peter and Hiroshi look at each other and smile. Both are slender and athletic, with mustaches and beards identically trimmed, and I remark that they look like Eastern and Western versions of the same species.

"Birders are the same the world over," Peter says, laughing, as we hoist heavy knapsacks and cases. "We already know a great deal about each other."

Encumbered as if for an Everest expedition, the five of us set out across town, by bus and two subways, for the science campus of Toho University, where Hiroshi teaches. Climbing out of the tunnel, we enter a world of narrow streets where houses and stores fit together like parts of a parquet floor that rises into the third dimension. Night is falling, and hundreds of neon lights throb from pachinko parlors, restaurants, and shops. It is like walking through the branches of a densely ornamented Christmas tree. After a celebratory dinner at a sumo wrestlers' restaurant, Hiroshi checks us in with the campus guards at the university's main gate, and we walk past a small flower garden to a building that has guest rooms on its third floor. At the end of the third-floor hall we find a toilet, a refrigerator, a deep Japanese bathtub, and vending machines for toothpaste and shaving supplies. Peter and I have been travelling for thirty hours, and have crossed the date line, but we are too giddy and excited to sleep. Hiroshi invites us to watch historic films of Torishima from his library of albatross films, books, and records, and takes us to his office, in a nearby building.

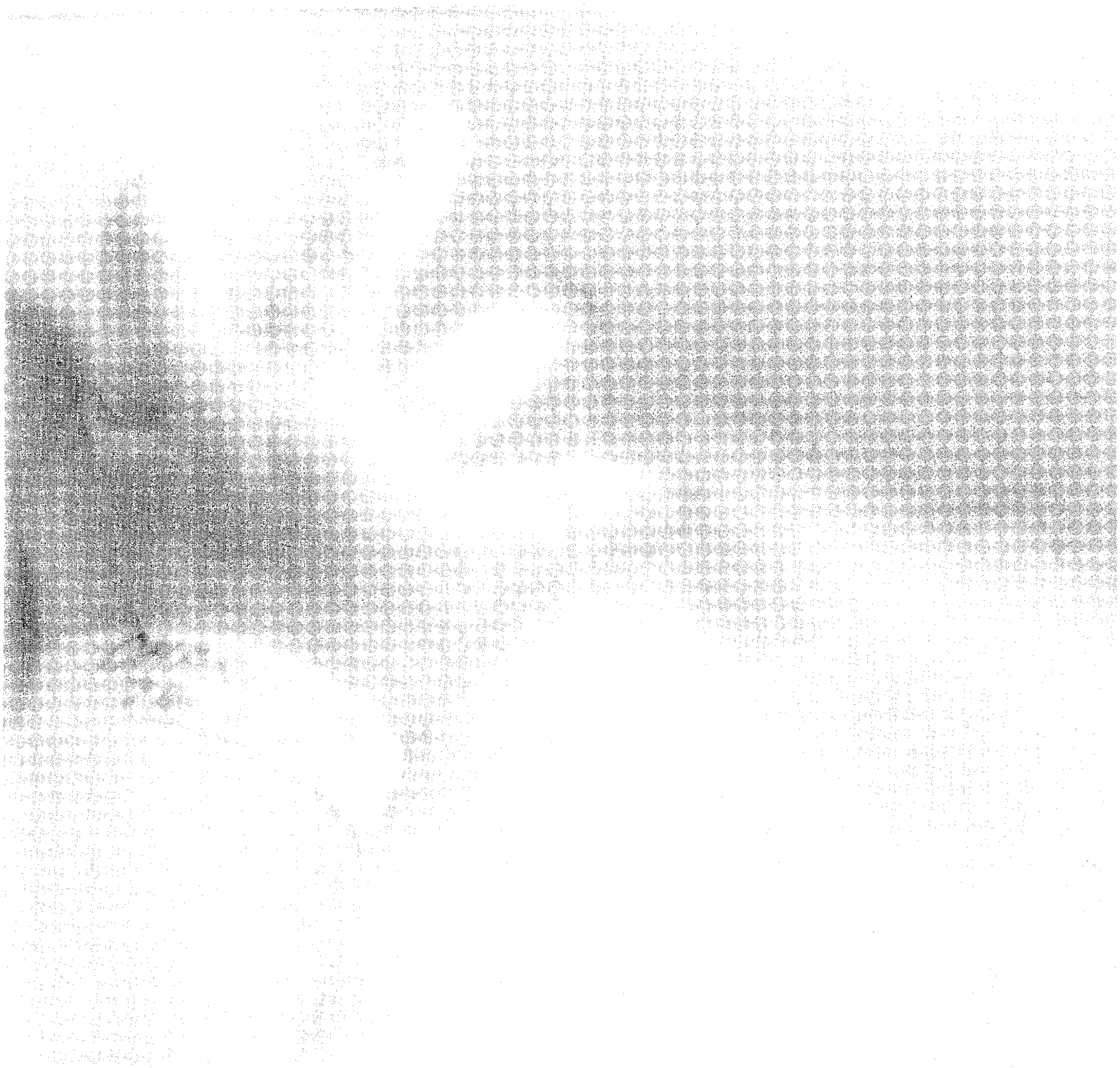
As we climb the stairs to Hiroshi's office, we see photographs of albatrosses on the walls. A light at the end of the corridor welcomes us into a room overflowing with books, wildlife posters, and more photographs of albatrosses, including a large banner on which an almost life-size albatross angles across the sky with wings spread, and Hiroshi's pièce de résistance—a framed closeup of a fluffy, potbellied short-tailed-albatross chick. We sit down on benches around a wooden table. Three graduate students arrive; one brings out a bottle of white wine, another cuts up some fruit, and we all eat and drink as we watch films of albatrosses—in Japanese, *ahodori*. The first is an old black-and-white film showing the large flocks of birds that once blanketed the island, pleating the cliffs with white. Japanese observers said that bird-encrusted Torishima then looked like a bubbling ice volcano. So many albatrosses filled the skies that a snowstorm seemed to be travelling around and around the island. Just offshore, the waves appeared permanently white-capped, so large and dense were the rafts of magnificent birds. Next, in sharp contrast, a color film shows us the few birds that are left, and we shake our heads in disbelief. How could such a thing have happened? The film includes a brief glimpse of the short-tail's extravagant courtship dance. When Peter sees it, he shouts, and bends forward for a closer look. "They stand on their toes! Oh, and look at that—scapula touch, head wagging, *castanets!*" He lifts tightly clenched fists in the air and shakes the electricity from them.

Mutually besotted, the courting pair throw their heads skyward, flap their huge wings, and begin clacking their bills like flamenco dancers gone berserk, producing what Peter calls "castanets." My heart starts to pound. Even on film, they are breathtakingly beautiful. Their quivering pink bills seem to have blue lipstick right at the tip and inside the mouth. And at the base of the mouth, on either side, runs a thin black bridle. Otherwise, apart from egg-yolk-yellow crowns, they are white, except that some immature birds have brown wings daubed with white epaulets. Leaning forward on the table, crippled by fatigue, we stare in amazement at the small screen, which cannot contain so large a bird—at the two-dimensional sizzle of electrons, which cannot depict the drama that awaits us—and we are saturated with excitement. When the films end, we make our final travel plans with Hiroshi, toast the albatrosses, and stagger to our rooms to sleep.

Early the next morning, two graduate students seek us out as we are having Japanese breakfast at the local restaurant—where, to our delight, we see Hiroshi's photograph of a short-tailed-albatross chick hanging on the wall like the familiar portrait of a royal heir. They hurry us out to where Hiroshi is waiting with our luggage. He motions toward his watch. There are many miles to cover today, so we must hurry.

With our large knapsacks, we might be turtles of some exotic species, but such carapaces make it easy for us to spot one another among the city's dense crowds. One bus, two trains, one monorail, and one airplane ride later, we land on Hachijojima, a small volcanic island, one of the seven islands of Izu, which dot the ocean south of Tokyo like a broken string of pearls. Hachijojima has some ten thousand inhabitants—mainly fishermen and their families. Sometimes people fly down from Tokyo to go game fishing or to take a rest cure at the local hot springs. The trees chime with the singing of bulbuls; clouds surge at night and catch on the peaks of the volcano; and the ocean blows up a fine mist at dawn. Because Hachijojima has the most remote airport in the islands, travellers heading for even more remote spots begin the final stage of their travels at its docks. It is a last handhold before one wades out into the plunging misnamed Pacific.

On Hachijojima, we are to spend at



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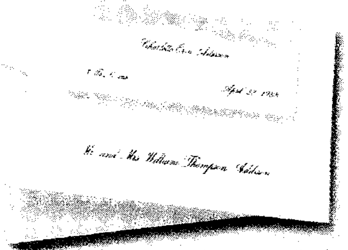

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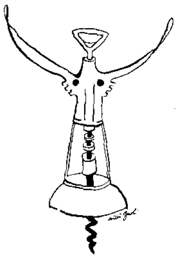
least one night at a small guesthouse owned by a couple who have become Hiroshi's friends over the years—Eke-san and Toma-san—and they meet us at the airport with their van. Toma-san owns a fishing boat and guides game fishermen around the island on sporting odysseys, and he also owns woodlands on the island. Hibiscus and bird-of-paradise flowers spill from the roadways as we drive into a nearby fishing village and up a narrow alleyway to the guesthouse, near the docks. We abandon the dirt of the outside world at the door, taking off our shoes and slipping into waiting sandals. Even the dust of the world is rich and beautiful here, but it belongs outside.



"*Dozo*," Eke-san says, motioning toward a low table in a room dominated by that table and, in one corner, a TV set. We sit down on the floor, slip our feet under a black-and-white quilt skirt hanging from the table, and discover a hivelike warmth underneath. An electric heater attached to the underside of the table showers a toasty glow onto everyone's legs. A cabinet at the far end of the room holds a framed copy of Hiroshi's short-tailed-albatross-chick photograph—we are starting to regard it as our own cabalistic sign. Next to it stands a brass clock, held aloft by two flying cranes, the Japanese symbol of longevity. A wooden plaque with the family's emblem—a sword and a flower—leans against the other side of the cabinet. Ten calligraphy panels stretch above the doors to the hallway.

Eke-san, a woman in her mid-fifties with short, swept-back dark hair, sits down on her knees beside us and bows with her hands on her thighs. She smiles and offers us coffee. Hiroshi turns on the TV to check the local weather, and we scrutinize the weather maps. A northwest wind and a typhoon are heading west through the region. Hiroshi and Peter study the isobars and discuss the approaching systems. A tight swirl of lines lying close together and changing direction signals a typhoon. To Peter and Hiroshi, both men of the sea, the pattern is as clear as a fingerprint. Three typhoons have passed close to Torishima this year, each washing away some of the island's soil. As Hiroshi counts the systems, he tucks his fingers in one by one; Peter counts them, too, but bends his fingers outward. We may be spared, but the weather is always chancy in this season, so they decide to wait for the next report.

Soon lunch is served—lacquered boxes with edible mysteries inside. Eke-san smiles at our huge appetites.

"Seabirds put on a lot of weight before migration," Peter says. "Some leaf or wood warblers put on half their weight in fat to make the journey to or from South America. I find that I do something similar before setting out on an expedition. You don't know when you'll have your next meal."

Bowing our heads slightly, we thank Eke-san in Japanese and say "*Oishii*" (it tastes good). Soon we will pay a call on the *sencho* (captain) whose small fishing boat will carry us to Torishima, and then we will buy our provisions, but first we must visit the local government office. Hiroshi returned from his last trip to Torishima with photographs of terrible erosion, which is obliterating precious nesting sites, and he has persuaded Japan's environmental agency to send out botanists and soil-management people to see if they can halt it.

At an office building in town, a tall man whose name translates as Star Field greets us. Hiroshi shows him photographs of the Torishima grass, and of the areas his people will be called upon to replant next year. All this activity must seem strange to this local government office. Hachijojima is a small island, and Torishima is minute—not just off the beaten track but eruptive, wild, and officially off-limits. Now, suddenly, the world is to come to Torishima, with scientists and video cameras, as an object lesson in how to pull a species back from the brink of extinction.

A secretary serves us green tea in blue-and-white cups decorated with fans. Light and spinachy, the green tea revives us. Hiroshi hangs his brown corduroy cap from his knee. Two large white scars stretch across the top of his left hand as the stigmata of his trade. He received those gashes while he was handling albatross chicks; their sharp bills are designed to nab a squid at one blow, so a hand makes a slow target.

"Ash blows like a dust storm," Peter explains to me, pointing to a photograph of barren hillside. "What may be needed is a mat system for the roots o bind loose ash together. You see, albatrosses need vegetation to nest. They dig a shallow hole in the ground and pull sand and grass together. It's not enough to give a bird an island; you have to give it the right vegetation, too, so that it can lay its egg. A couple of years ago, as an experiment, Hiroshi planted eulalia on a small area of the island. There was an immediate increase in the number of albatrosses that were hatched. Now he urgently hopes to replace the rest of the island's lost vegetation. He will be asking Star Field and his colleagues to plant in June, the rainy season, with a view to having the nesting area ready for the birds next October."

Ten of the men will be meeting us on the island, so the government official discusses supplies and equipment with Hiroshi. After taking our leave, we briefly visit the *sencho*, then stop at a bakery, a grocery store, and a liquor store. If we get weathered in on Torishima, we'll be glad of extra provisions. When all the supplies have been acquired, Hiroshi sighs easily at last. A cormorant perches on a wooden stanchion, and Peter and Hiroshi lift their binoculars to their eyes as it arches its wings into a Prussian cross. In China, a fisherman will put a tight ring around the neck of a leashed cormorant, so that it can't swallow what it catches, and have it fish for him from his junk. Here, in freedom, the bird spreads its wings to dry them in the sun.

"Our first trip to Torishima—very soon now," Peter says, anticipation bubbling into his suntanned face.

"I have been there thirty-seven times, and I am still as excited as you are," Hiroshi says.

"You've been there more than anyone else on earth, anyone in history," Peter says, letting his binoculars drop to his chest. "And you've been such a good protector of the birds. When you arrive, the albatrosses should line up, rock forward on their feet, and bow." He rocks onto his toes, angles his arms out to his sides, and makes a stooping half bow. Hiroshi, picking up another part of the courting dance, arches his chest out and his arms back. I add yet another element by kissing my left shoulder, then my right, with arms angled out from my sides. I do not know what passersby make of this scene, but fishermen on small volcanic islands in the Pacific are surely used to

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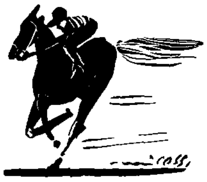
all sorts of strange birds. And the castaneting and whinnying we three do next probably doesn't surprise them much, either.

At home, we again sit down to eat, tucking our legs under the quilt. Eke-san brings us hot green tea. Tonight, there is a fried fish that Westerners call leatherjacket, along with sushi, tofu, vegetables, and mandarin oranges for dessert. Conversations in Japanese and English and pantomime brighten the room. But when the weather report comes on the TV, talk stops: in a land of fishermen, the weather is emperor. The only other event that halts conversation in Japan is sumo wrestling. Somehow, it seems quite unsurprising that Hiroshi, a man of zest and good humor, who appreciates the many forces of nature, should be passionate about lighter-than-air albatrosses, so gentle and leaflike, and also about the heavy-hammed sumo wrestlers.



Jet lag, time lag, and fatigue seem not so much to catch up with us as to collide in our brains, and by nine o'clock we are yawning. Thanking our hosts, we climb the stairs and wash at a long communal sink in the hallway.

Eke-san arrives a moment later and leads us to our rooms. In mine, I find a mattress on the floor covered by a cherry-red comforter and a white eyelet-embroidered sheet. Thanking Eke-san with a small bow, I bid her good night, and hear her sandals clatter gently down the stairs.

Lying in my bed, I listen to the sound of a cricket chirping somewhere behind a panel. A hallway light shines through the paper panes of the door, which glows softly. The wind blows against the shutter, making it grumble. A carved lattice of pine at the top of the wall allows one room to breathe into another, and I can hear gentle soughing and occasional snores from my fellow-travellers.

A violent thunderstorm rattles in during the night, and the winds, shifting suddenly, sound like silk kimonos snagging in the trees. At eight-thirty, Peter and Hiroshi and I meet downstairs for a breakfast of miso soup, fresh-cooked salmon, a raw egg, bread, rice, cabbage, and coffee. A red lacquered box in front of each of us contains strips of dried seaweed.

"Well, what do you think, Hiroshi?" I ask as I wrap a length of seaweed around a ball of rice and raw egg.

"I don't think so," he says, shaking his head. "Do you play golf?" he asks unexpectedly.

"No," I say.

"I was thinking about golf this morning," Hiroshi says. "In golf, if you get a hole in one under par it is a birdie, two under par is an eagle, but three under par is an albatross."

"How would one get an albatross?" I ask.

"You'd need a long hole—at least a par five—and you'd have to take two strokes."

Peter, Hiroshi, and I begin to laugh as the same image dawns on all of us. From Tokyo to Hachijojima is the first stroke. From Hachijojima to Torishima will be the second. We are on an invisible fairway. Fate is choosing its irons. Soon the *sencho* phones with a dreary sky report. Who knows how long this storm system may blow?

So we find ourselves weathered in on Hachijojima, with two days still to travel before we can get to Torishima. Ours is a strong sense of pilgrimage, and, just as an initiate must take an arduous religious journey to discover what is sacred, we are beset by many unavoidable steps and hardships on our quest. Even when we finally arrive at Torishima, we will sail in at night and will have to wait until morning to see the birds. And there will be the cliffs to climb. Few people have ever seen the birds on the island, many fewer Westerners have—and no other Western woman has. Hiroshi does not subject his graduate students to such a trip; it is too dangerous. Although we are going to Torishima for many reasons, one of them is to stand witness. Life-forms such as these need to be beheld and celebrated: that is our privilege, as earth ecstatics, but it is also our duty, as the species responsible for their destruction. "It was the Japanese who brought the short-tailed albatross close to extinction," Peter says as we sit eating bowls of hot sticky rice. "But we are all responsible. And, though we're in the final seconds of the final hour, that hour hasn't struck yet. There's still a chance we can save them."

A PAINTER by profession, Peter Harrison began life in a seamen's orphanage, along with a twin brother and a sister, in Brixham, a fishing village on the south coast of Devon, in southwestern England. (Both parents had died young.)

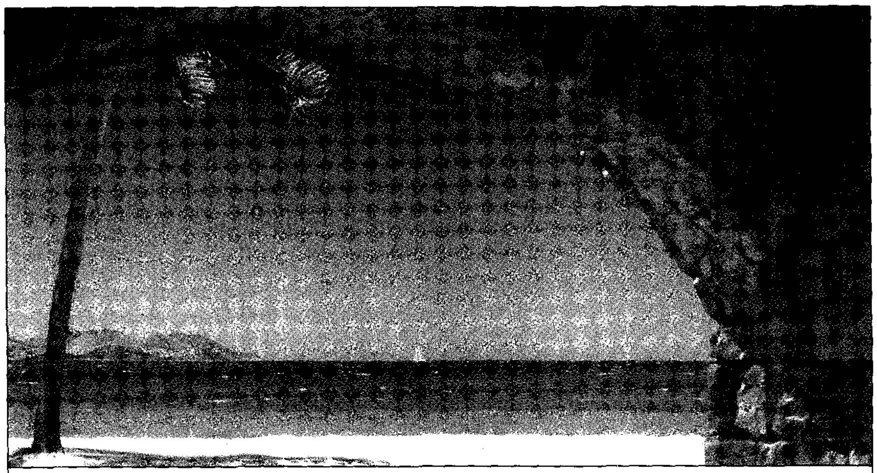
"It was a wonderful place," he says as we sit on the floor in the main room, listening to the rain fall on a metal roof across the street. "People say, 'Isn't that a shame—growing up in an orphanage, and all.' But, let me tell you, it wasn't a Dickensian, Oliver Twist, 'Please, sir, I want some more' experience. It gave us all a great start. The orphanage was a big granite building, with big gables, green paint, and lots of boys—fifty or sixty boys—and it was wonderful, inasmuch as it taught us a way to live. Most of the boys ended up going into the Royal or the Merchant Navy straight from the orphanage. Because it was a seamen's orphanage, we were taught all about the sea. We had a library full of sea books, and that was where I first found Robert Cushman Murphy's famous 'Oceanic Birds of South America,' which is still the finest seabird book ever written. The orphanage was right next door to a very small shipyard, which built the replica of the Mayflower that is now in Plymouth, Massachusetts. I watched the Mayflower being built. I was always good at art, and we were always in the yard, so I actually painted the bottom right-hand petal of the mayflower on the stern. On weekends and evenings, we'd go out sailing in whaleboats—big whaleboats. You can imagine what that was like for a nine- or ten-year-old. We used to go sailing, hiking across the moors, doing navigational stuff, rock climbing. While other kids would be kicking a football around a street corner, we were out having fantastic fun.

"Just beneath us was a cliff covered with breeding seabirds, a place called Berry Head. On Saturdays, we often explored the place. You know how boys are. They used to let us out, and we just ran wild, exploring everywhere, and hanging on to the cliffs. In the winter, those cliffs were absolutely deserted—bare, gray rock. But come spring, when the wind was blowing with a hint of ice still on it, these birds that had been out at sea would come back and start reoccupying their nesting colonies. The more you look at a bird, the more you realize that it's an individual. You start to see little differences in each one. And so I got used to seeing individual birds come back, esecially certain common murres and hags. I knew which birds were the ame ones from last year and the year efore. Two years when you're a child s a lifetime, so the return of the breedng seabirds was a big thing in my year. guess I fell in love with birds at that ery early age. Anyway, there was othing sad about the orphanage. It ave us a very good grounding in what consider all the important things in ife—the sea, birds, rock climbing, wimming, and surviving. It was just ncredible."

Peter left school at fifteen, without ny qualifications or certificate, but went on to get an art degree from ondon University. Then he landed a ob as an architect designing British mbassies. It was a cushy job. He and is wife—he got married at the age of wenty-two—had a house, cars, paid olidays, and a pension; life was conveient, predictable, and secure.

"But there came a time," Peter says, 'when I said to myself, 'One day, I'm oing to be sixty and look back and wonder what I did with my life. I will ave designed British embassies, held down a job, and all that sort of stuff, ut what did I really *do*?' With that in mind, I persuaded my wife to go round he world, and we just threw everyhing up and sold the house, sold the wo cars, and bought a Land Rover. We thought it would take four years to visit all the seabird sites of the world. There really wasn't a good, authoritative seabird guide, and I decided to write one. The four years became seven years, and we travelled everywhere, getting jobs all over the world. Most of the jobs were on boats, since that's the best way to be near seabirds. I worked on all sorts of fishing boats and trawlers and research boats. When we got back home, we were destitute, and I soon had a family with two children to support. So I took a job as a fish filleter. I used to get up at five and go down to the fish quay at six and fillet fish until about midday, wash up, go home, get the book out, and start writing and illustrating. I spent four years working eighteen-hour days. I'd often work beyond midnight. It took three years just to do my sixteen hundred illustrations of seabirds."

When his "Seabirds: An Identification Guide" was finally published, in 1983, after eleven years' work, it received the Best Bird Book of the Year Award in England and became an im-



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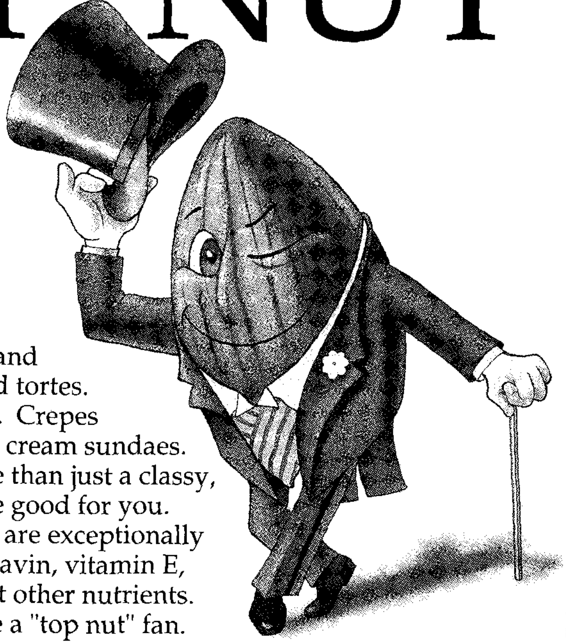

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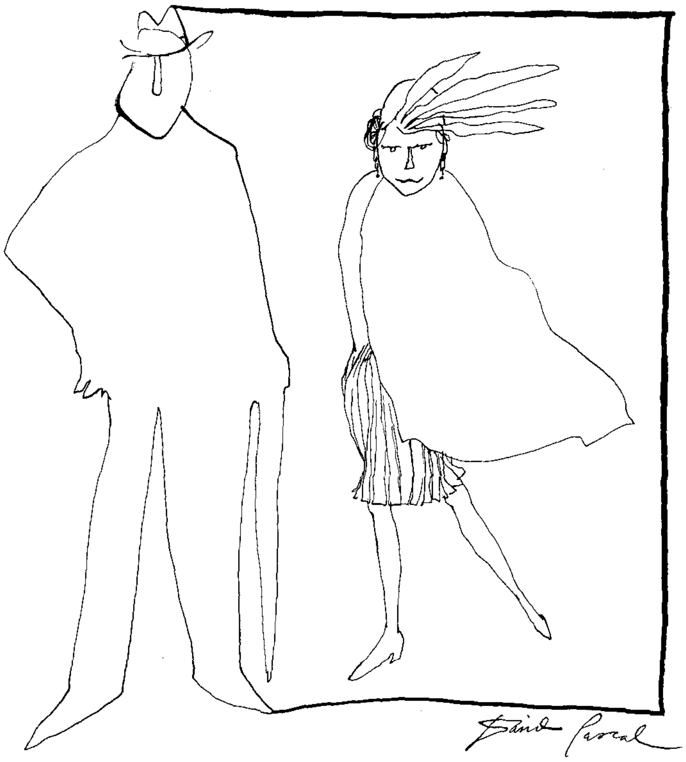
mediate best-seller. That same year, Peter began lecturing and acting as a guide for Society Expeditions, a cruise-ship company based in Seattle. Society's ships have since become his floating villages, and, because they tend to go into remote locales, they allow him to thicken his life with adventure. He has been to the Antarctic sixty-six times. And he has found that even on standard voyages there can be surprises.

"I always tell the passengers, 'If you catch any birds on deck, just chuck them into my cabin,' " Peter says. "Well, once, I was up late drinking with friends, and when I returned to my cabin there were *forty-two birds* flying around!"

Now Peter is working on his eighth book. Although he is not a "lister" (a birder who keeps a compulsive tally of sightings), he is well aware that he has seen three hundred and fifteen of the three hundred and twenty species of seabirds. Besides the short-tailed albatross, he has yet to see the Chinese crested tern, the relict gull, Barau's petrel, and the Fiji petrel (which has been seen only twice in the past ninety-nine years). He spends from seven to nine months each year at sea. When he's home, at Land's End, in Cornwall, he works on large paintings, mainly of seabirds and mainly on commission; his paintings hang in museums and galleries in Britain, Australia, and the United States. He spends most of his time as an ornithologist-guide, renowned for high spirits, banter, long nights at the bar, and a stubborn refusal to let anything—rocks, glaciers, storms, deserts—stand between him and a bird. He has athletic hands, as steady as ingots. A year ago, as Peter made his way down from the observation deck of a ship in the Antarctic, I heard a woman say to her neighbor, "It's amazing the way the ocean becomes a desert when Peter leaves."

A day rarely passes during which he isn't sketching, painting, or envisioning something. He doesn't mind getting really mucky—reaching into burrows after Antarctic prions, scaling cliffs for nesting shags, wading up to his thighs in ropy Amazonian mud, shuffling through guano as thick as smudgy peas. In fact, the filthier, hungrier, sorer, and more weather-beaten he gets, the more he seems to glow with a deep-down radiance. Meeting nature on its own terms, acceding to its rhythmic demands, he is able to snare it in the net of his imagination long enough to study its gestures and moods, and then return to his paintings. He seems to relish making the drama that normally spins itself out in four dimensions pause a moment and roost in two.



A LITTLE OF HIM AND LOTS OF HER

ON our fifth morning, the day finally breaks calm and sweet. We pack hurriedly, eat a huge breakfast, and rush down to the wharf, where the *sencho* of a crew of three welcomes us aboard his fishing boat. For hours, Hiroshi has been veering between febrile excitement and absolute dread. It is a testimony to his devotion to the short-tailed albatross that he willingly, even joyously, makes this trip time after time when he knows that it will poleax him with seasickness. *Mal de mer* is a grief he suffers diabolically—always has and always will. The ghost of seasickness stalks him for days before every trip to Torishima, and, as he well knows, November promises colossally high seas. On board the boat, the first thing he does is take a soporific anti-seasickness pill and claim his favorite corner. Meanwhile, Peter and I climb up to the top of the bridge deck and sit down on a hatch. We wave goodbye to Eke-san, Toma-san, and a line of well-wishers as our boat pulls slowly away. A reddish-brown sea turtle swims by, and seems like a stepping-stone pointing us back to a safe harbor. A line of fishing boats appears on the horizon with scoop nets for catching sardines. Soon Hachijojima shrinks into a small gem set in the bevel of the ocean. The boat rolls from one side to the other. A blue mast swings against a paler-blue sky. Thick golden ropes hang in military braid down to and around a dark-green mizzen. Other ropes lie loosely coiled on the deck, like sleeping snakes. In one corner of the poop deck, large white plastic jugs of water rattle against each other. The mast, narrowing gradually at the top, quivers in the wind. We are in a six-foot sea, where the waves run wild and choppy; there are no large open swells yet. A stretch of puffy white clouds quilting the horizon tells us of an island somewhere below them, too distant for us to see. As the swells become stronger, spume shines fluorescent white against the glazed blue of the deep sea—colors familiar in Japanese art. Occasionally, the boat jolts like a drawer being slammed back into a desk.

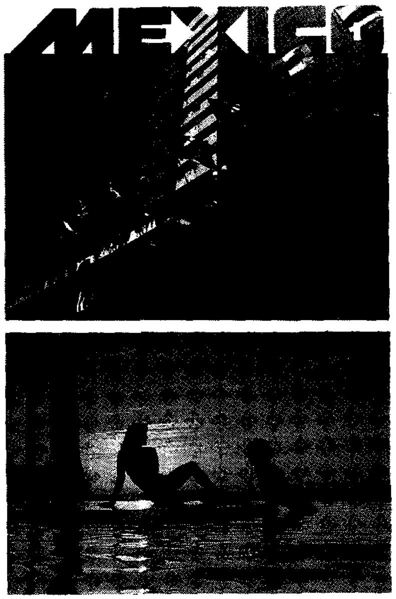
"We're out of the shade of land now and in the open sea," Peter says cheerfully. He looks relaxed and happy. The sea is as familiar as a motto. "There is a rhythm to the sea, and the sea obliges you to adopt it," he says. "You haven't any choice. So I sometimes think of the ocean as the heartbeat of the world. If you stand anywhere on any shoreline, even if it's at a lake, and just listen, letting the stillness descend around you, it doesn't matter where you are—there's always a rhythm, a beat. I love being a part of that bigger self. The ocean is a living thing that occupies two-thirds of our planet; it's fragile, yet it also teaches us how vulnerable we are as a species. For me, it's an escape route, too—I find it hard to stay in one place. And then there are the incredible birds. When I see a seabird thousands of miles from land, I'm always filled with a kind of awe, because I know that if you took any of us five miles from land and threw us overboard, probably not one of us would make it to shore. And yet you can take a seabird, which has a brain the size of a pea, and release it a thousand miles from land, and it will not only survive but return to its nest site." Now, lifting one of his cameras, Peter snaps a few shots of the fishing boats pegged like pillowcases against the horizon.

A sudden swell catches us, and our boat skids like a chariot swivelling on one wheel. The cobalt-blue waves grow thick with white lather. The ship's mate raps on the hatch and hands up mugs of soup and noodles and two pairs of chopsticks. My stomach is swirling, but there is nothing like a plunging sea to make your spirits rise, nothing like the snort of the waves to fill you with a galloping sense of adventure. Somewhere on the ocean, there is always a sun street leading to the horizon, a path of glittering light. Outbound, we sailed straight down it, but now, in the afternoon, the ocean has turned to obsidian, and the sun street stretches off to starboard.

At three o'clock, Peter spots a black-footed albatross to the east, and within seconds it has crossed the horizon behind and to the west of us at about seventy miles an hour, jetting straight up, then planing sidewise and zooming down to the sea surface, only to wheel up again. Albatrosses sail along in three dimensions. "Dynamic soaring" it's called, but the phrase is too awkward and mechanistic: an albatross can set in motion a flight so exquisitely balanced and attuned to the compound marvels of wind and water that it needn't land, or even flap its wings, for hours, for weeks—even for months. By the reliable sorcery of physics, the wind right above the water blows more slowly than the wind higher up. If an albatross flying over the ocean wishes to go upwind but doesn't want to flap its wings to get there, it starts into a long, slow dive toward the surface of the sea, and enters the slower-moving air. Suppose the bird is flying at twenty miles an hour in a wind of fifty miles an hour. When it flies in the direction the wind is going, it crosses the sea surface at seventy miles an hour. Then, when it dives down into the barely moving air near the surface, it has a lot of momentum left over, which it can't shed. It trades some of this extra speed for altitude, and shoots up even higher than it was before. It is still flying at twenty miles an hour, but now at a higher altitude, so it turns downwind again, and continues its perpetual motion of swooping and soaring. Because it's crucial to get into the lowest air velocities as near as possible to the sea—every fraction of an inch counts—albatrosses maneuver like high-wire artists right at the sea surface. Sometimes you can actually see one of their feathers touch the water. Over the exploding, convulsing surface of the sea, albatrosses follow every minute fluctuation of the waves with their wing tips. And they have no need to flap. Indeed, an albatross flying six hundred miles will flap less often than a sparrow crossing a narrow street. A large bird needs long legs and big feet for takeoffs from water. In fact, sometimes, if the wind isn't quite right, it will run along the surface of the sea for fifty yards or so and just give up. Almost certainly, the albatross we are watching has flown from Torishima. We greet it as a herald, and follow its swooning path until it disappears from sight.

Albatrosses often sail right up to a boat, to feast on cooking scraps or to fish in the freshly churned wake, and sailors welcome them. Albatrosses have enchanted people through the ages. For one thing, they have enormous wing spans—of as much as thirteen feet—and can weigh twenty-five pounds. (An eagle or a condor is a runt compared with an albatross.) They gleam like freshly painted satin, and they are serene, gentle, regal. No wonder they appear in the magic and myth of many countries, as Coleridge knew when he turned an albatross loose in his "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"—a poem that has done much to shape its image as a bird of ill-omen. Coleridge had never actually seen an albatross. In 1797, when he and Wordsworth went on a walking tour of Somerset, they decided that the way to finance the trip was for them to collaborate on a narrative poem. As it turned out, Coleridge later composed the poem on his own, but

Oh! What places to go!



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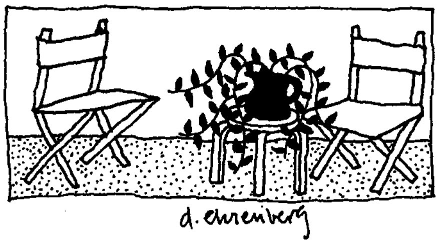
during their walk Wordsworth, a great reader of natural history, who had just come across an explorer's account of sailing through Drake Passage—between South America and Antarctica—gave Coleridge the idea for his "Rime." Baudelaire, too, wrote about this "monarch of the clouds," which he saw as a metaphor for the poet, so often clumsy in the pedestrian world, but only because of his powerful, huge wings. In "Ida" Gertrude Stein admired the ceremoniousness of albatrosses: "She had once heard that albatrosses which birds she liked the name of always bowed before they did anything." The Maoris of New Zealand carve albatrosses into the bows of their boats to guarantee a peaceful voyage.

Albatrosses do nest, preferring out-of-the-way places, but they spend most of their lives on the wing, wandering the world's oceans. Nomadic, ever-moving, full of the wind's eloquence and swing, they are creatures bound inextricably to the sea. Amazing as it sounds, they can fly for five years without ever returning to land. In low winds, they stretch their wings out full, like canvas sails. In high winds, they partly fold their wings and hold them in at an angle, to decrease the sail area. Rough weather is an albatross's delight. Indeed, it can even catnap as it flies. Because it has a small windspeed recorder in its bill, it can doze while its brain goes on autopilot; a sudden gust of wind will send a quick signal to draw the wings in or stretch them out; in fact, an albatross has been known to hit the side of a boat while asleep. But when albatrosses do return to land they use its green stage for all it's worth. Their courtship involves long, elaborate Oriental-looking dances, full of kissing and caressing and posing like Kabuki dancers, and symphonic mating calls, which echo from the hillsides where they nest. Observers become enchanted with their beauty and their behavior. Their names reflect the majesty and romance that people have found in them, translating into marvels like "pale-backed moon goddess."

One of the earliest uses of the word "albatross" is found in a narrative, published in 1698, by Dr. John Fryer about a voyage around the Cape of Good Hope, en route from South Africa to the East Indies. He spelled the word "albetross," as a corruption of the Portuguese word *alcatraz*—used for several large seabirds—which was derived from the Arabic *al-qadus*, *al* meaning "the" and *qadus* meaning both "water carrier" and "pelican-like bird." Fryer wrote of the albatross as "Those Feathered Harbingers of the Cape." Because albatrosses like to feed over shallow water where there are upwellings, the first sign of land may well be a gathering of albatrosses. To sailors, albatrosses symbolize something mythic. They are habitual ship followers, and there is nothing eerier than standing on the deck of a ship, looking up and seeing a bird with wings thirteen feet wide sail up to you, floating absolutely motionless on outstretched wings, and looking down and cocking its head sideways, as though it knew you. Superstitious men used to claim that albatrosses were the reincarnated spirits of dead sailors searching for their friends. Lighter than air, seemingly made of wind and whitecaps combined, the birds float like restless, transmigrated souls.

Nonetheless, sailors have killed albatrosses, and found uses for most of their body parts. Their oily vomit was used to waterproof boots, the downy breast feathers to make muffs or capes, the sewn-together skins to make feather rugs. Rendered carcasses produced fertilizer and more oil. Sailors also fashioned tobacco pouches from the webbing of the feet, and pipestems from the hollow wing bones. We no longer, of course, expect such creatures to be useful; we only ask that they survive, and thrive.

SOON the sun slides behind a thick wall of clouds, finds one small hole, and hangs there like a perfect ruby above the horizon. At last, it vanishes in a shimmying layer of mauve clouds. After sunset, we climb down to the main deck and crawl into the low-ceilinged cabin, cluttered and dim: it looks like a room that a truculent child has refused to tidy up. It is twelve feet long, six feet wide, and only about three feet high. On a gas hotplate, a green enamel kettle is corralled in stainless steel. Next to it sits a white porcelain rice steamer under a calendar whose photographs show Japanese fishermen at work. Although this cave is much too low to sit up in, all kinds of electronics have been crammed into the space—a VCR, a TV, a weather fax receiver, navigation screens. There's also a wooden shrine. Six of us stretch out on blue and green blankets in the hot cabin, which is thick with cigarette and cooking smoke. The *sencho* passes out bowls of rice, yams, fried tofu, eggs, shrimp, and squid. As the others are eating heartily, I get violently seasick into my bowl, turning away into a corner as far as possible as I do so. Now, with nothing inside to nourish me for more than twenty-four hours, I will certainly have to drink a lot of water when I get to Torishima. But it feels good to be so empty, so ready to be nourished again. After dinner, the crew members chat quietly in Japanese, and Peter and I in English. Our languages have such different tempos and inflections that they pass easily through each other's open weave.


d. ehrenberg

"What's your favorite memory of finding albatrosses?" I ask Peter.

Bracing his shoulders against a wall, he tucks a rolled-up jacket beneath his back and tries to find a place for his legs in the jumble of limbs. The *sencho* passes him a can of beer on whose label prances a mythical animal—half horse, half dragon.

"That would probably be climbing for albatrosses on Cape Horn," Peter says after a few moments' thought. "I was on an expedition in a small sailboat called the Totorore—the Maori name for the Antarctic prion. The Totorore was only thirty-six and a half feet long, with a draft of three and a half feet—small with a shallow draft because we were working in uncharted waters, going into sounds, and bouncing off rocks all the time. Sometimes we had to haul the thing onto the shore and have a look at the keel, to make sure we hadn't holed anything. With a bigger boat, it would have been much more dangerous.

"The guys I sailed with were Alan Cowan and Gerry Clark—and Gerry got the M.B.E. from the Queen for his work on the Totorore following this expedition. It was really the toughest expedition I've ever been on. In all my travels—and I've been doing this sort of thing for well over twenty years—this was certainly the closest I've come to death, and not just once or twice a day but many times. It seemed that every day was a battle, and, one way or another, you were fighting the weather, fighting rocks, fighting the sea—fighting something. We lost a lot of weight, we got hurt quite a bit, the ship was rolled a couple of times, we lost part of the mast. The trip was in pursuit of seabirds—particularly albatrosses. What we were trying to do was to map as many of the seabird colonies at Cape Horn as possible. Only one survey had ever been done before ours, and that was fifty years earlier. We decided to do it on the anniversary of that expedition. Its members had only scouted some of the islands, and we were determined to see every single island around the Cape Horn peninsula. I was there for only six weeks, but it was the toughest part of the survey—at the site that involved the most climbing.

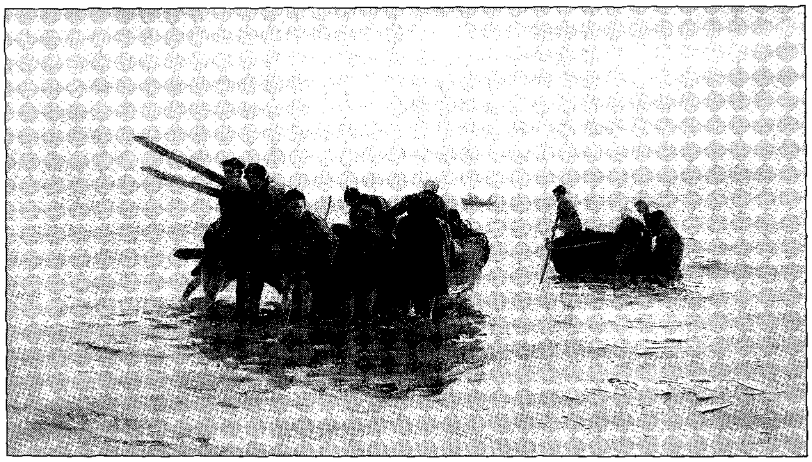
"We lived on the boat, which was both home and laboratory. One day, we came to Ildefonso, which had been climbed only once before, back in the thirties. We'd been in the Moreton Islands seven days, waiting for the weather to clear, which seems a hell of a time, and had been doing whatever bits of research we could do. Then, one day, Gerry reckoned it was time to go, and we sailed out into about eighteen miles of open water. As we approached Ildefonso, we could see why its name had brought terror to everyone who wrote about it. It was a ridge that had been cut by time into about fifteen different stacks of rock, all of which rose perpendicularly out of the water, and the sea down below was just boiling. It was a cold day. The surf, although there were no whitecaps around, was fifteen or twenty feet high, and the only way to get in on stuff like that is for two of you to climb into a small rubber boat and row in toward the cliff, and then, when you get as close as you can, one of you jumps over the side and swims in toward the rock. You try to judge it so that the wave takes you, gently, to the base of the cliff. Then you grab hold of the rock and cling like a marine iguana. You're wearing gloves, of course, and you grapple with the rock, and get your footing and handholds, and then you start climbing. The water's going down fifteen or twenty feet with each wave, and you know that at the top of this island there are albatrosses.

"We were trying to find gray-headed albatrosses, because they're very rare around Cape Horn. We'd seen some flying around, but we couldn't tell if they were nesting on the top of the island. The only solution was to climb and see. Imagine water rushing at you and submerging you, so that as soon as it's at about waist level it starts to suck you off the face of the cliff. You take a deep breath and strain every single muscle to hang on for dear life. The wave reaches you, you're about ten to fifteen feet under water, your heart starts pumping, and you just hang on. You know that if you hang on long enough the water is going to go back down. As soon as the water drops, you take that first breath, which is always great. Then you start climbing again, and then the water surges past you again. You might go through two or three duckings, but eventually you do get above the tide line. You're soaking wet, of course, and that makes it hard to climb.

"Well, there was about a three-hundred-foot pinnacle, I suppose, and there

Charles Roussel in his studio on rue Perrochaud, Berck, circa 1930.

CHARLES ROUSSEL
(1861-1936)



"Departure of Two Barques," Oil on canvas, 24″×42½″, SLR, 1911.

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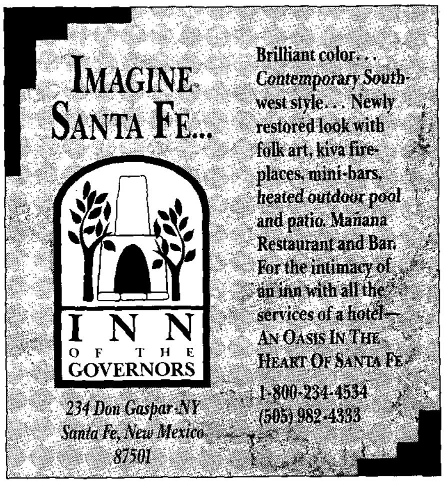
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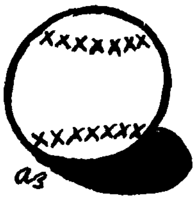
were lots of handholds, and things were looking pretty good. I had already decided on my route—I'd stood in the boat beforehand and worked out where there were chimneys, fissures, hold lines. No one in his right mind tries to climb a vertical cliff if there's a fissure you can wedge yourself into and inch yourself up. That's a lot safer. And there were a few of those, but there was one place, twenty or thirty feet up, which was what we call 'pretty good exposure.' In other words, it was a flat rock face. What I hadn't seen from the bottom was that there was an overhang, which is about the worst thing you can have in climbing—especially if you don't have ropes. You have to come up, reach over, and then make sure that you throw yourself out correctly. And there's no return. We call it a 'jughandle.' You reach over, throw yourself out, and as you come around you pull up (I always pull up with my left arm), and then, as you clear the overhang, you're in space, totally committed. You just have to pray and rely on your brain to work out fast enough where your next handhold should be. You grab hold and often just hang two-handed, suspended over nothing. Then you haul yourself up, and to do that you need decently strong arms."

Peter takes a sip of beer. "And a little bit of nerve," he adds, eyebrows lifting. "But basically it works—that is, provided your first handhold is secure. If you're halfway out and the rock breaks, or something, you lose all your purchase and you're finished. On that particular day, things were going really well, and I was filled with elation, because, climbing up, I knew that only one man had been up there before, and that was many years ago, and I'd already seen the first signs of gray-headed albatrosses. Gray-heads have this wonderful soft French-gray head, with a white eyeline and black eye shadow, and they have this bright-orange halter across the face, and a black bill with a chrome-lemon top ridge to it coming down into a hook, the tip of which is red. They're beautiful birds. So I was perhaps a little bit too keen, and I could see Gerry and Alan below in the Totorore sailing up and down and watching my progress. Anyway, I came to the overhang, and I had a good jughandle, and I just launched myself up and over into space, and, of course, the unthinkable happened. The rock came away in my hand.

"When you're climbing, you've always got to have a Plan B and a Plan C as well as a Plan A. Well, Plan A is that everything goes well. Plan B is if that handhold breaks, especially if you're over water and not using ropes, you push yourself away from the rock, because the rock is what will hurt you. Falling through air can't hurt you, you can fall for quite a while, but at some stage you're going to have to pay. If you free-fall onto rocks, of course, you're dead. Plan C is that you pray or scream, usually both, on the way down. We measured the fall that day, and it was a hundred and twenty-five feet, into the water. You try to roll yourself into as tight a ball as possible before you hit the water, so as not to break a limb, and then you spread your limbs fast to keep from sinking too far. I remembered to do all that, but, I must say, I was badly winded. That was the biggest fall I've ever had—a hundred and twenty-five feet. The world disappeared in a mass of white and turquoise bubbles. I had a camera, and it was torn right off me by the impact. Alan was across with his Zodiac, rowing like hell. Got hold of me, dragged me out, got me back to the Totorore. We had a medical chest, which always held a good supply of whiskey. On birding jaunts, I've noticed there always seems to be more whiskey than anything else in the medical chest. So I had a good couple of cups of whiskey, and got into the Zodiac again, went across again, and chose a slightly different route up.

"It was worth it. It was absolutely incredible. When I got to the top, what should be there but seven pairs of gray-headed albatrosses in amongst about fifteen hundred black-browed albatrosses. That was the first time anyone had managed to prove breeding for gray-headed albatrosses on Ildefonso. It was very exciting. I was on top, and there was a whistle from below, and, looking down, I could see the wind getting stronger, and the others becoming concerned about this change in the weather. So I made a quick exit. I wasn't on the island more than an hour. Within ten minutes of getting back on the Totorore, we were in the middle of a Force 9 gale which eventually got up to a Force 12 storm, and then we were blown all the



way back to another group of islands.

“Sure, we have a lot of adventures, a ot of experiences, on expeditions, and here are good stories over glasses of beer. But, basically, it’s hard work. And sometimes danger. There’s no such thing as a serious expedition without drama. It can happen from some of the simplest things—people spilling hot water over a foot, so it goes septic and you wonder if you’re going to have to amputate it. No one in his right mind s looking for danger, but sometimes people want to go on an expedition for the wrong reasons. I find that if you go to do research and to work hard the trip usually dishes out as much drama as you can handle.”

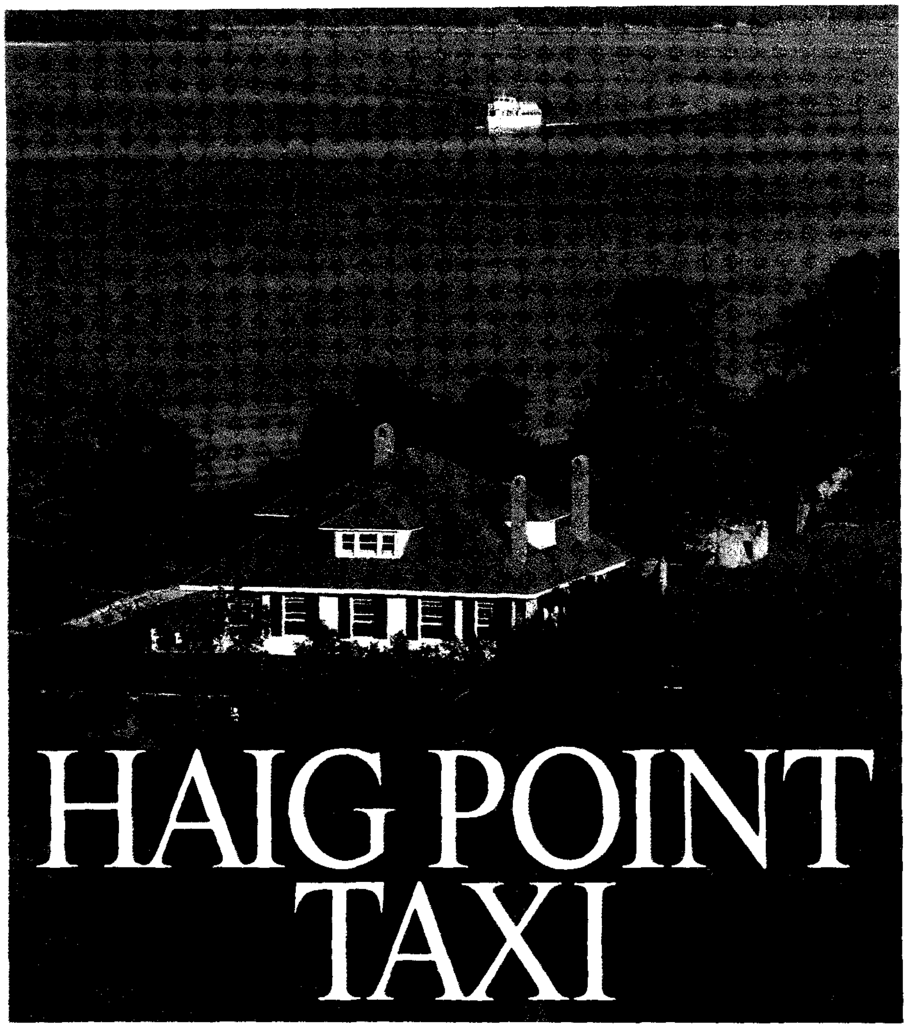
An hour or so later, the *sencho* leans deep into the cabin, whispering “Torishima, Torishima!” and pointing off the stern. In a rush, Peter and I climb over the sleepers and out onto the deck. The night is iced with stars, stars in a wilderness of stars. The lights of four distant fishing boats twinkle off our port side. Then I begin to see a greater darkness in the night—Torishima, bulging up right before us. Peter and I look at each other in joy and disbelief. We are here, actually at Torishima, after so many months of planning and waiting.

“Camp,” the *sencho* says, pointing to one side of the island. We follow the line of his hand but see no land—only a trail into deep space. Our base camp is invisible. We nod, thank him, and stagger back into the cabin—it’s like crawling into a low, floating cattle shed. Peter arranges himself against one wall, and I against the opposite one. We close our eyes and try to sleep. There is no point in waking Hiroshi, because no one can see or do anything until daybreak. After a few minutes of silence, a brief, mournful call strikes across the waves.

Peter’s eyes flash open, and he sits up and whispers excitedly, “Hear that? Short-tailed albatross!” Then he lays his head back down on his fisherman’s sweater, against a large clock, below an ornate gold mirror, and falls asleep, smiling.

At first light, we rise and stumble out onto the deck again, this time to see the island clearly; it’s black and nugget-shaped. We have drifted a little in the night, and the *sencho* quickly climbs above the wheel and steers it with one naked foot.

Hiroshi wakes up and joins us, with



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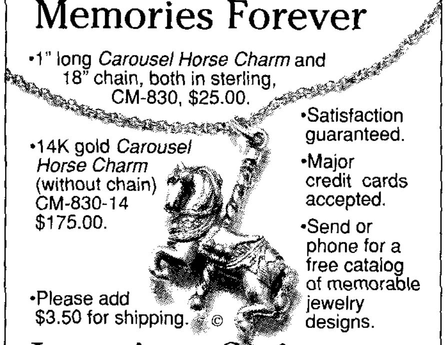

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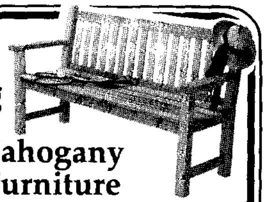

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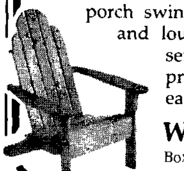

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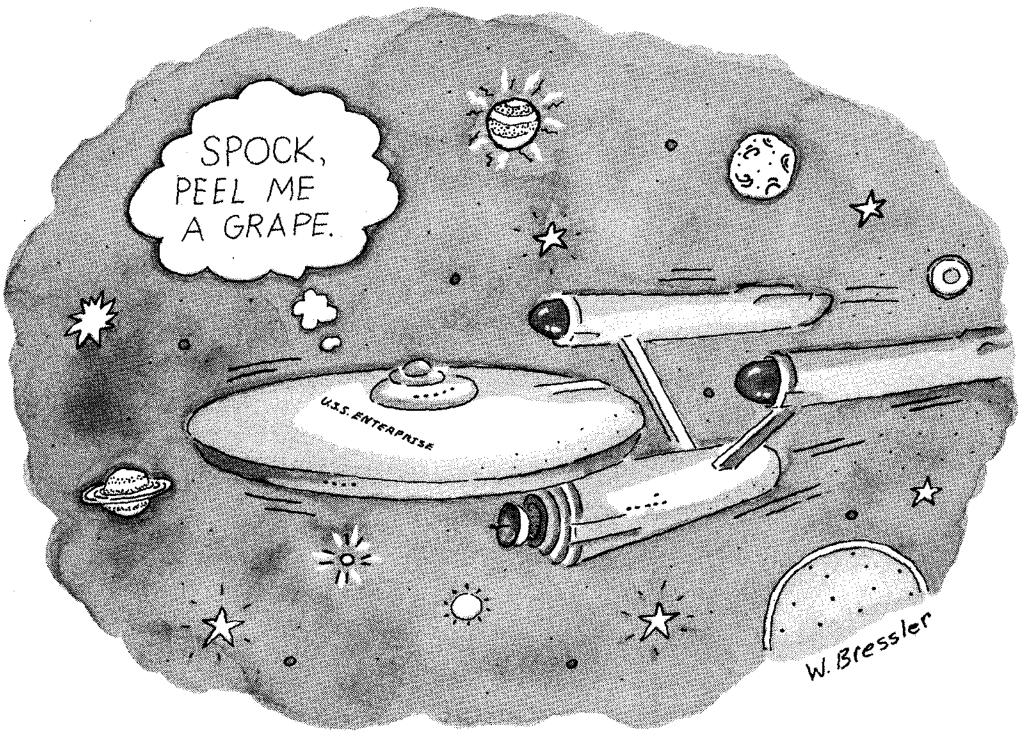

THE GRAPES OF KHAN

• •

a broad smile. "Torishima!" we cry in unison, arms wide, like three opera singers frozen in the midst of a tremendous scene.

MAKING many Zodiac runs, the *sencho* drops us off in a steep, boulder-strewn inlet with fifty boxes and sacks of food, water, and camera equipment. We wave goodbye to him, and turn and face one another as if for the first time. Hiroshi unpacks tall jugs of Chinese tea and orange juice, and we pass them among us, along with sweet rolls. Neither Hiroshi nor I have eaten for twenty-four hours, and we are hungry, but this is more a token meal, a chance to pause for a moment at the island's rim and break bread together.

"Torishima," Peter says quietly, nodding as if in answer to a question.

"Torishima," I say, feeling some of the same cold thrill I felt the first time I looked through a telescope: there was Saturn, with its broad, sherbety rings and all its radiant moons in tow, just where it was supposed to be—a hidden world.

"Torishima," Hiroshi says, with the pride of an innkeeper unlocking a legendary gate.

High above us, on a promontory jutting from a sharp, twisted tumble of black rocks, stands a small concrete garrison, which will be our home and also the home of the government team of ten men which is joining us. Getting there means climbing the equivalent of fourteen stories of almost vertical rock. The men carry the heavy loads, silently, though their faces groan. Puffing hard, I balance lighter loads on my head, as women do the world over, and carry sacks draped around my body. At an especially awkward point, we work together: Peter tosses boxes up to me, and, using that momentum, I toss them higher, to where Hiroshi lifts them higher still. Before long, everyone's hair is slicked down with sweat.

"Friends," Hiroshi says, pointing to a second inlet, not far from the one in which we landed. There the government team has begun unloading its supplies, too, and is climbing like a militia of ants up the mountain. Some carry stacked boxes in front of them; others have plastic baskets roped to their backs. We wave to them, and haul our first supplies over the last ridge to the garrison. Set back from a patio of rock, where the remains of a cannon sit, the building has one doorway and only rifle-barrel-width windows. In front of it lies a curious heap of neatly arranged lozenges. Long ago, bags of concrete became wet, liquefied, and hardened. In time, their outer sacks weathered away, leaving only an array of stone pillows.

Hiroshi walks into the building, looks around, picks up a half-decayed rat with a gaping mouth, tosses it outside, and says, "Yes, this is home."

Greeting the government team halfway down the mountain, we join forces with it and spend the next hour hauling up all the supplies. When we finish, some of the men unpack small amber-colored bottles and down some sort of tonic. A cook they've brought with them has already begun preparing rice while the men see to their knapsacks. Inside the bunker, a strict protocol governs the sleeping arrangements. A low wall of boxes runs down the center of the room. "You eat away your privacy," Peter says, laughing, as he helps to stack boxes filled with dried seaweed and tinned squid, among other things. Ropes divide our space from that belonging to the ten government men. Hiroshi, Peter, and I will be sleeping in one corner, barricaded by boxes, with me between the two men. As we begin to unpack some personal items, Hiroshi presents me with a sleeveless green nylon poncho. Light and voluminous, it falls in folds to the ground, and it has an elasticized hole at the top.

"To change your clothes," he explains, smiling. "It's what women use in canoes."

I shake my head in amazement. He has thought of everything.

By now, some of the men have set up a low wooden table on the ground in front of the building, and rolled up a log on each side of it. We all sit down for a quick breakfast of peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, cheese, fish, and rice. Hiroshi hands Peter and me plastic bowls and red enamel mugs. His own mug is black and white with a green kingfisher on it and the legend "We Love Bird Watching." After breakfast, as the three of us stand near the edge of the cliff, drinking coffee, looking at the opalescent dawn light over the sea, a dark form appears suddenly above us and arcs across the sky. Peter swings around and cries,

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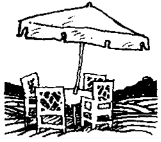

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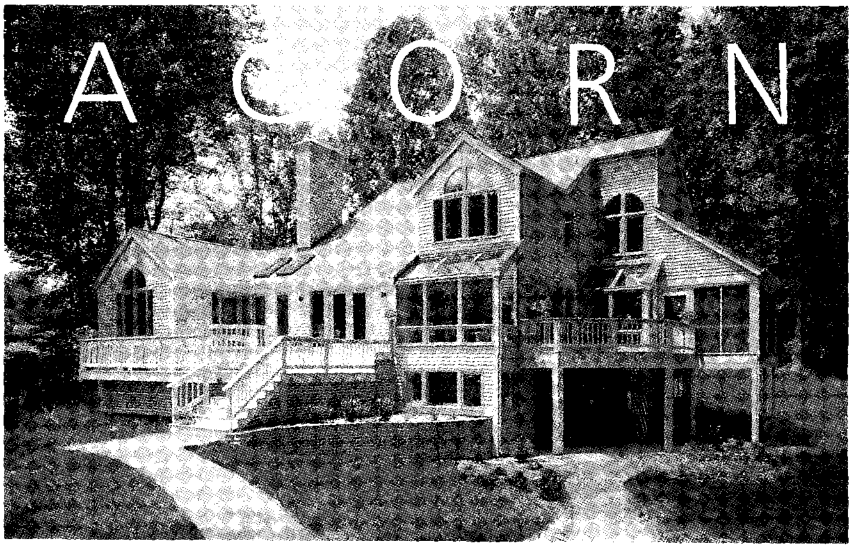

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"Short-tailed albatross—immature!"

Hiroshi and I do a small war dance with him, and then formally congratulate him. "8:38 A.M.," Hiroshi notes, checking his watch.

Peter has seen his last species of albatross, and he places one hand on his chest. Joy floods his face. For ten years, he and Hiroshi have been exchanging letters about his coming to Torishima. Hiroshi warned him not to wait a lifetime, and now here he is, standing on a rock outcropping once occupied and abandoned by feather hunters, a garrison, and a weather station, seeing his first short-tailed albatross. As he has pointed out, this one, in its brown colors, is immature. He longs to see the adults, with their golden crowns and their pink bills, and we decide to set off at once.

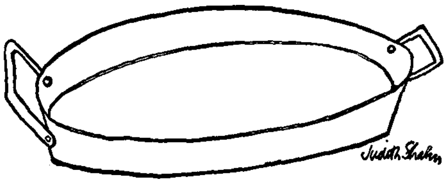
As everyone prepares for the hike across the island, we indulge in small good-luck rituals—retying our shoes, adjusting our helmets, tucking our pants into our socks to protect them from scree. Then the thirteen of us set out in a long caravan, climbing behind the garrison, past the ruined barracks of the abandoned weather station, over a steep meadow of grasses and low, bunchy yellow chrysanthemums. Below, large skirts of frozen lava ripple toward the coast, where they long ago covered up a whole village. Making our steepest climb in the early part of the day, we cut across the mountains obliquely, walking up a glacier of crushed lava, and over ground singed with bright-yellow sulfur salts and hot black scabs. At midmorning, we reach the flattest place on the island, at the base of Sulfur Peak. There a field of lava rocks—missiles ejected from the volcano—has turned the narrow col into a windblown moonscape of stark black and white. Moon Desert, Hiroshi calls it. He points to an emptiness at the end of the col, where the land drops away and the approach to the cliffs begins.

"We'll be able to see the albatrosses from there," he says excitedly.

He rushes on ahead, and so do the government men, but Peter and I go on walking as slowly as before, until we cannot make the moment wait any longer, and the col opens into an explosion of tall pinnacles and wind-ripped cliffs, where rock walls spill down through twisted chasms. There before us stands the fortress of the *ahodori*. At the bottom, far down an impassable set of interlocking cliffs, a small flock of brown-and-white birds dots the grass. They look like handkerchiefs someone has dropped on a lawn. An invisible fist knocks the breath out of me, and I sigh out loud. There are so few of them. It is heartbreaking to see the last remaining nesting short-tailed albatrosses on earth. Over the breeze we can just make out their whistles and whinnies, and their castanets, which sound like hollow wooden pipes hitting one another. The scene throbs with color—the oxidized orange of the bulging cliffs, the green of the grasses below on which the albatrosses nest, the tan of the rock face, the black of the lava. Through binoculars I see the yellow heads of the birds, close now, but still so far away, so inaccessible. Above them, a fantasia of albatrosses sails across the sky. Men built a garrison at the other side of the island, but nature built one here that is far stronger and more impenetrable. Because of this natural fortress, the birds have survived the onslaught of human beings. Peter stands at the lip of the cliff, one hand lightly pressing his binoculars against his chest, his eyes damp with emotion.

Hiroshi joins us, and we three stand silent and gaze at the fortress for some minutes. It is utterly astonishing that Hiroshi has been studying the birds in such an impossible spot for the past fourteen years, that he has managed to bring out news of them, and even, on rare occasions, to take the outside world down below for a closer look. That the birds' numbers are increasing is a great testimony to Hiroshi's work and to the support of the Japanese government. It's comforting to think that in a high-speed world, where people sometimes content themselves with shallow efforts, naturalists like Hiroshi are devoting their lives to saving a single species. What a rich remembrance, to know that you preserved a miraculous form of life from disappearing forever from the planet.

"Let's go," Hiroshi says, at last, and we set off along the east side of the walls. On a previous trip, Hiroshi painted a large white "O" on some of the rocks along the way, to help make the descent safe. Still, it is a steep, slippery climb, down sheer four-hundred-foot cliffs. When we come to a particularly awkward plunge, Hiroshi attaches a rope to a rock. A climber can pass the rope behind the waist and then, by holding one end in the right hand and one end in the left, can lean back against the rope and use it to slip and brake a way down. I have never climbed this way before, but I like the feel of the rope as it slides and rasps through my hands. Leaning back, I try to lower myself slowly, but my foot swivels, and suddenly I skid toward the cliff edge, clinging to the rope. Loose stones clatter below. Everyone freezes. Above me I see Peter, Hiroshi, and the ten other men perched around on the rocks, watching me suspended over a three-hundred-foot chasm; all emotion has been smashed out of their faces. There is no point in looking down. Lesson No. 1: *Don't let go of the rope.* Hanging on with my left hand, I bring my right hand around, find a handhold, and pull myself back up. Once I have a footing, I continue across a rocky bridge, and let the rope loose for the next person. Above me, people begin to move normally again. The next climber takes the rope, becomes confused, freezes in fear midway across, and will not budge. Peter climbs down after him, and at last coaxes him along.



Despite their knapsacks full of camera and surveying equipment, the other members of the team gradually work their way down the first section of the cliff, and then we all angle across to a more severe plunge. Here Hiroshi has hammered four pitons into a rock at the top, from which he has hung a rope. Peter and Hiroshi have both been doing rock climbing for many years, and I understand at once how seductive it can be. At each station along the way, it seems hawklike to perch high up in towering freedom, to pause and look out over the valley below and the ocean beyond. But I especially like the puzzle of figuring out which rock will make a handhold; what tablet, pyramid, or silo of earth to cling to; what slender ledge to put one's foot on. Sometimes you are wildly gripping the bones of the planet, and at other times tiptoeing down the shallowest of stairways. It is a strange, tentative searching with all one's limbs, and it unites you, as nothing else could, to the core of the world, to the violence that forged it, to the thrust and fall of

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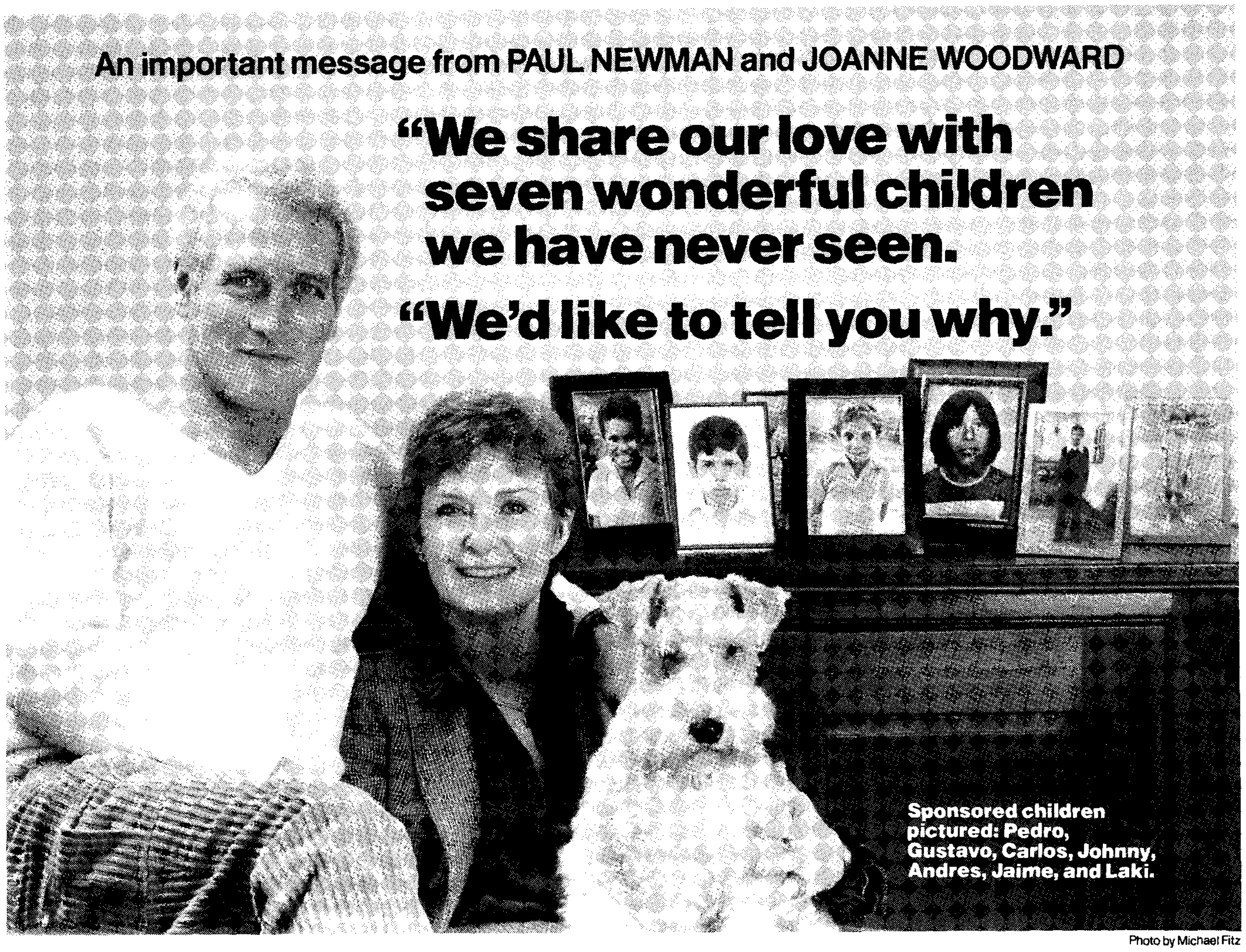

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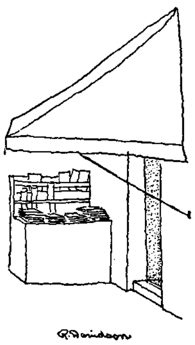
rock frozen in the memory of a mountain. Rocks have *veins* and *faces.* And there is the texture of rock—at one moment raspy, spiky, and brutal, and at the next gentle, forgiving, and smooth. There are the colors of blood, midnight, and autumn. There is the steep persuasion of gravity, drawing you down the ladder of the Earth's rocky spine. Again I misstep, and, holding onto the rope, slide back onto a ledge, collect myself, and continue down to where Hiroshi, seeing that I'm all right, leaps onto a hill of deep sandy lava and cascades with it clear to the bottom. Peter does the same, and I follow. Then we scramble up a small dune, and suddenly find ourselves staring straight across a scraggly plateau at two bustling colonies of short-tailed albatrosses.



Nesting, yawning their wings, romancing, tending their eggs, bickering, they go about their ways only two hundred yards from us—just far enough away not to be frightened by our presence. Heat waves shimmer from the lava. Vibrant white, with radiant yellow heads, and coral-pink bills tipped in blue, the adults are incredibly beautiful. A subtle shadowy brow runs along the top of each dark eye. Glossy, elegant, as smooth as wax, they stretch their airy wings, and, even sitting, embrace the wind. The adolescent birds have plumage mottled brown and white, sometimes with striking white epaulets. All wear small, discreet colored bands around their right legs—a present from Hiroshi, so that he can identify them. Each color denotes a different year. A white band, for example, was put on the right leg of each of forty-seven birds hatched in 1986. There are actually two colonies of birds, separated by a black swirling drapery of lava, which is narrow enough for the birds to walk across. A young bird sometimes takes a mate in the other village and settles there. Depending on the wind, a bird may land in the lower village and climb up to the higher one. The older birds (the ones with whiter plumage) prefer to nest in the center of the colonies, the younger (darker-plumaged) birds on the outside. Some are sitting on eggs. A pair lays only one egg per season—a large, dull-white egg weighing about a pound. Occasionally, a bird will stand, rearrange its feather petticoats so that the egg nestles more tightly against the warm brood patch, and then, with a twitch or two, settle down on its soft haunches again. Two eggs lie outside nests; that means the chicks within have died. In a species as rare as this, where every newborn counts, those eggs are a tragic sight.

A particularly lovely female, with a bill the sultry coral of a Bahamian sunset, opens up her downy wings and preens them gently. Every single feather has its own nerve and its own muscle. I try to imagine what it would be like if I could put my arm out and twitch every hair separately. A male approaches her, and suddenly she spreads out the white skirts of her wings and curtsies to him. He curtsies back. Then he reaches his bill forward and brushes up a few of the feathers on her breast. This drives her wild. She slides her bill down along one side of his and starts delicately kissing the small feathers at its base. He does the same to her. Then they pull back a few inches and start a crescendo of clacking that might be a spoon hitting hollow wood—castanets. They roll their heads together from side to side as if they were packing a snowball. Then he rocks forward onto his toes, arching toward her, and presses his chest out like a sail in a strong blow. She does the same. Suddenly, they toss their heads skyward, stretch their necks long in mutual yearning, quiver and flap and trumpet to high heaven.

Their wild, otherworldly music drifts across the grass, half whinny, half moo—it's like "the surrealistic lowing of cattle," Peter says. Next, they do a "Groucho walk" around each other—a low strut with their shoulders hunched—and then they face each other and start to curtsy again. While this erotic minuet continues, dozens of black-footed albatrosses—a darker and less extravagant species nesting nearby—engage in more modest courtship dances of their own, in which they sound like speeding cars screeching around tight curves.

All at once, a white short-tailed albatross sails in from the ocean, flies a wide spiral around the colonies, banks and tilts with fluent grace, and begins what is called "reefing." Arching its chest, it pulls in its huge, sail-like wings halfway, lets its big feet hang down, ruffles up its tail feathers as a sort of air brake, and tries to slow down enough to land. Around and around it flies, soaring and reefing, swooping low and rising high, with an eloquence that leaves us gaping, not quite sure on which pass it will lose enough flying speed and touch down at last. The sunlight shines through the webs of its yellow feet, as through the paper panes on the door of a Japanese house.

"*Kirei,*" I say, as more of an exhalation than a word. It is the Japanese for "beautiful." And I mean all of it: the heat mirage—a transparent drapery of shot silk between us and the colonies; the nesting birds sitting like alabaster statues; the ceremonial square dance of the courting pairs; the incoming bird whirling low and then climbing into steep registers of sky and half swooning like the high notes of a saxophone solo.

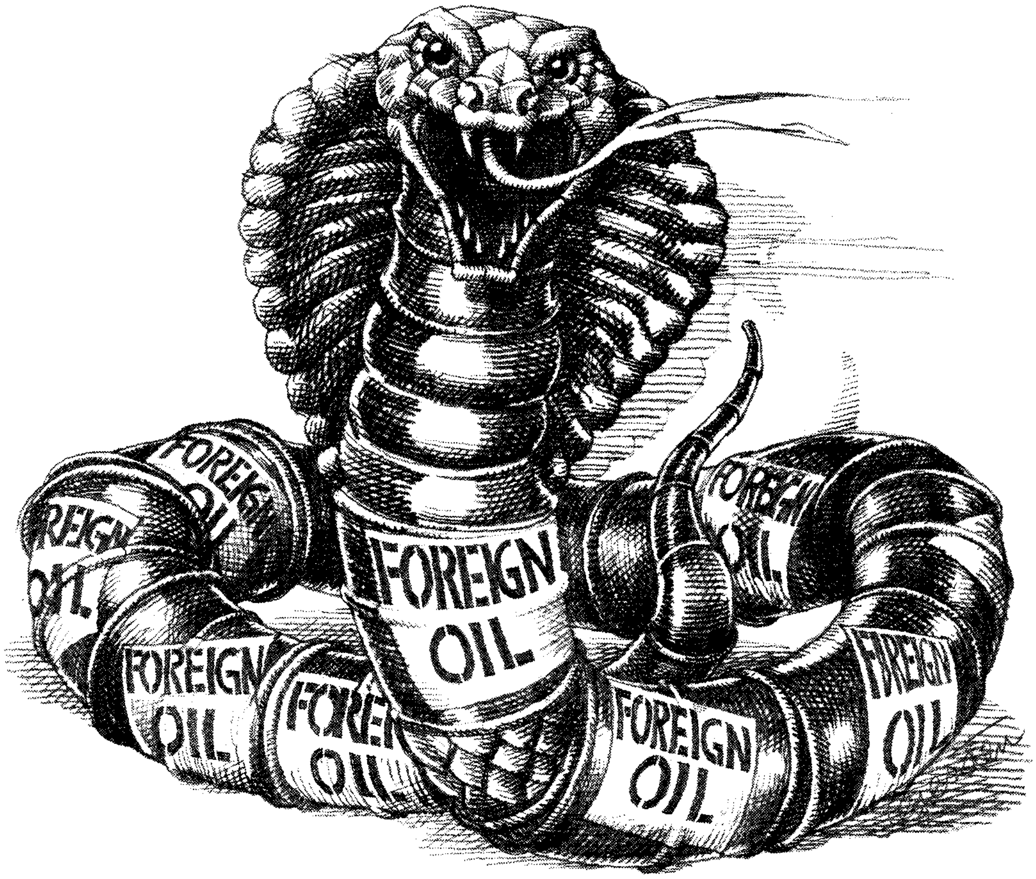
"*Kirei,*" Hiroshi says quietly, his eyes also following the hypnotic flight of the reefing albatross. It twitches its tail a few times.

"Why are they called short-tailed albatrosses?" I ask. "Their tails don't look unreasonably short."

Without shifting their gaze from the birds, Hiroshi and Peter smile. "It's because of the way their feet stick out," Peter explains. "Their tail appears smaller than it really is—it's just an illusion. They could equally be called long-legged albatrosses."

"It would perhaps be better to call them by their other name—Steller's albatross," Hiroshi says. "Especially since a number of the animals named by George Steller—a great German naturalist, who first described them—have become extinct." Pulling a notebook from his pocket, Hiroshi begins taking the year's census of birds, eggs, and mated pairs. Peter takes out his sketchbook and soon fills two pages with courting pairs of albatrosses caught in the midst of telltale gestures. An albatross passes over our heads, and the sound of the wind rushing through its feathers is exactly like that of a 747 flying low. At last, it reefs in over the upper village, stretches its feet down even farther, does a head-to-toe twitch arpeggio with umbrellaed wings, and lands in a series of recovered falls, which ends only when it somersaults onto its back. We laugh. Albatrosses are great courtiers, great aerobats, and also great buffoons.

By midafternoon, the birds that have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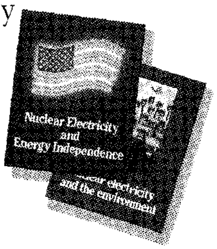
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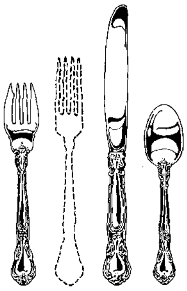
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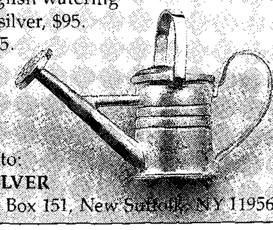
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spent the morning feeding at sea return to their colonies. They enter the fortress skies one by one, and gradually form a giant kettle overhead—a great bubbling of birds. As one dives, finds a calm, drops anchor, and lands, another slips in on top of the thick stew of albatrosses now circling, angling, wheeling, sliding across the sky. Wings spread, they make black crosses against the silver sea. An albatross sails in low over our heads, drops its feet, reefs its wings, and cuts close to the ground, only to be lifted by an updraft. It spreads its wings and sails around for another try, misses again, sails around once more, braking with its feet, swooping and turning, and, in desperation, heading in close to the cliff face to get a stall effect. That finally works. In twenty attempts at landing, it did not flap its wings once.

The albatrosses seem safe and at ease in this rocky cloister. Every one of them is descended from a few who were at sea when their brethren died. Once young birds are fledged, they go to sea, and they remain there between three and five years. Decades ago, some young birds that had left the island, and had thus escaped both the bludgeoning of feather hunters and the volcanic eruptions, formed the nucleus of all the birds we see today. If, unlike other albatrosses, these birds are wary of human beings, it's understandable. Fowlers started coming to Torishima in 1897 to harvest the feathers, and by 1900 there were two thriving villages and some three hundred people. When the volcano erupted in 1902, there were a hundred and twenty-nine people in one village, and all of them died under a mantle of lava. But other fowlers came to replace them, and went on coming until the nineteen-twenties, when there were no longer enough albatrosses to make a permanent settlement worthwhile. In 1933, a Japanese edict declared Torishima a sanctuary, but in 1932 the fowlers, knowing that they were about to lose a favorite hunting ground, had set out for one final slaughter. This massacre reduced the number of birds from a workable breeding stock of about two thousand to between thirty and fifty individuals. In 1939, the volcano erupted for the second time in this century. What had once been a favorite nesting ground of the short-tailed albatrosses was charred to the blowing cinders that Hiroshi calls the Moon Desert. During the Second World War, the government stationed a garrison on the island, and the soldiers reported sighting only one albatross. In 1949, Oliver Austin, an American ornithologist, circled the island in a Japanese whaler but did not see any albatrosses at all, and he believed the bird to be extinct. But there must have been a few hidden nests, perhaps just four or five. A few birds were spotted in 1950. In the autumn of 1965, the island sustained many earthquakes, and the personnel from the weather station (formerly the military base) were evacuated.

Alone at last in their stone citadel, the depleted family of short-tailed albatrosses gradually rallied. Conservationists had meanwhile made sure that the International Council for Bird Preservation, which held a conference in Tokyo in 1960, recognized the species as endangered. This step led the Japanese government to designate the short-tailed albatross a national monument in 1962. When Hiroshi became involved with the project, he went at it like a dynamo. On November 17, 1976, he made his first trip to Torishima, and he has since returned at least twice a year—to study the birds, monitor their progress, and do whatever he can to help them recover. In 1956, there were just twelve nests. In 1988, eighty-nine eggs were laid.

That may sound like a great success story. But short-tailed albatrosses are still desperately endangered. If the volcano should erupt again, as it could at any time, and if it destroyed the area where we now sit, it is unlikely that the albatrosses would be able to nest anywhere else on the island. Breeding would stop. So it is vital for the albatross to be attracted to as many additional sites as possible. Hiroshi hopes that if the birds can be persuaded to multiply well on Torishima they will establish nesting colonies on other islands, too. On the leeward Hawaiian islands, short-tailed albatrosses have been spotted sitting alongside black-footed and Laysan albatrosses, and they have also been seen on Minamikojima, in the Senkaku Islands. But they haven't been observed nesting at either site.

Although Hiroshi has been the knight errant and keen observer of the short-tailed albatrosses, they remain a feathered mystery even to him. Because

ey are so few, it's difficult to chart
eir seasonal movements, although
ere are a few scraps of information
bout their habits, in particular, and
uch more is known about the habits
f albatrosses in general. In early Oc-
ber, the short-tailed albatrosses re-
rn to Torishima, wait offshore for a
w days, and then start landing on this
nall platform at the base of the cliffs.
lbatrosses are long-lived; on the av-
rage, they live between forty and sixty
ears. They are monogamous, and a
ird has a rendezvous with its mate at
e previous year's nest site. A young
ird, returning to the island after sev-
ral years at sea, will begin the baroque
ourtship display that insures a tight
air bonding. Young birds may not
nderstand how to copulate, but they
ften try it anyway, even if one of them
nds up sitting on its mate's head by
istake. What they're doing in their
arly years is practicing romance and
arning how to set up a home. The
ourtship display, which they must per-
ect so they can dance in unison as one
apture, one yearning, is necessary to
ring each of the pair to a pitch of
rousal where copulation can occur.
ntercourse itself lasts only thirty or
rty seconds. The extravagant buildup
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When a pair goes to sea, its members
on't stick together, and some individ-
als may fly as far west as the Pacific
oast of North America or the Bering
ea. The male returns two, three, or
our days ahead of the female, recog-
izes her on sight, and greets her with
eremonial bows. Then they indulge in
ourtship rituals for a few weeks, and
he lays an egg in late October or early
ovember. Incubation lasts sixty-four
r sixty-five days. The female sits on
he egg first, and after about three
veeks the male eagerly spells her and
its for about twenty-two days. During
ncubation, the bird on the nest stands
p and turns the egg every few hours,
nd, of course, it can't leave the nest to
at or drink. During that long fast, an
lbatross can lose about twenty per cent
f its weight. The female relieves the
nale for another twenty-two-day shift.
s the time of hatching approaches, the
ouple grows excited, each almost
ushing the other off the nest, as if each
vanted to be the one to hatch the egg.
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the chick and protect it from the elements—sun, dust, storms, and so on—and from predators. There aren't enough albatrosses left on Torishima to sustain a population of serious predators, but in the old days jungle crows and ticks accounted for about a third of all chick deaths. These days, the cause of death is mainly inexperience. A bird sometimes accidentally knocks an egg out of the nest, and once the egg is out, the bird has no idea what it is, and won't retrieve it.

Albatrosses fly over the ocean, mostly at night, to fish for shrimp and squid, which come to the surface leaving a wide luminous trail. The birds do not feed on the wing, though. When an albatross spots prey, it skids to a halt on its feet in the water, simply paddles like a barnyard duck, and, with one deft movement of its long hooked bill, snatches up the morsel. Sky-roaming nomads, the parents feed farther away from their chicks than any other group of birds. Indeed, some albatrosses have been recorded feeding nine thousand three hundred miles from their nesting site. The birds may take to the ocean to forage between ten and twenty days at a time, storing the partly digested food in a special hamper at the top of the stomach. When they return, they regurgitate food to their chicks. After two or three weeks, both parents have to work to feed the chick, as its demands grow, but by then the chick can safely be left alone at the nest.

In May or June, adult short-tailed albatrosses gradually lose interest in parenthood, and they desert their plump young chicks, which now look like rangy brown volcanoes. A chick will sit around on the island as long as two weeks, losing weight and testing its wings, and then—unaided, untutored—it sets off on its first flight. In Hiroshi's office, we saw a film he had made of just such a chick taking its first flight, with much trepidation and clumsy stumbling. Facing into the wind, it sprinted on its big feet across the slopes of Torishima, wings out; after it had run for forty yards or so, its wobbly legs suddenly began to dance, its wings floated like a parasol on a windy street, and, with a wild-eyed look of astonishment, it coasted out over the sea. How poignant it must be for Hiroshi to watch his avian family fly, year after year, knowing that he's not going to see any of them again for at least two years, and possibly four or five.

WHEN the light starts to fail at day's end, we reluctantly pack up to leave. Soon the cliffs will be full of shadows, and climbing back to the land of human beings will be too difficult. We would prefer to stay, camping out at the edge of this natural stage and watching albatrosses coast among the Gothic spires of rock, but the site is too exposed—and too perpendicular. As their whinnies fill the air behind us, we hoist our burdens and start our long climb.

Back at camp, we find the government team busy with dinner, so we unpack and take seats around the low table. Peter laughs when he sees the banquet being spread before us. Expeditions usually mean canned goods and stale bread; tonight, there is pepper steak, rice, barbecued fish, sushi prepared from freshly caught fish, and fresh vegetables. Then the cook brings around a platter of cooked limpets, a delicacy. To me they taste dense and gristly, like the inside of a horse's hoof—including the stones. Mandarin oranges and beer and strong Japanese spirits follow. Overhead, five bird constellations—the Crane, the Swan, the Phoenix, the Peacock, the Eagle—watch us in silence from their stone-cold aviary among the stars. Exhausted from the long day's rigors, everyone wanders into the bunker, crawls into a sleeping bag, and waits with eyes closed for the generator out back to run down, so that a bare light bulb inside the bunker will go out.

NO alarm sounds, but at precisely three minutes to six all ten of the government men wake up and stretch their arms wide, and then, one by one, they drift lazily out of the bunker. The cook yawns, tucks in his shirt, puts a large kettle on the gas burner. We eat breakfast quickly, excited to be heading back to the fortress. Though Hiroshi's backpack looks even heavier today, he manages to carry it cheerfully. Once more, we climb past the abandoned weather-station barracks. The haunting notes of a plover drift across the morning as we hike over the lava lakes and through fields of yellow chrysanthemums. Today, the walk is faster and easier. The journey up is different from the journey down. While we're fresh, we climb steeply at first, then continue

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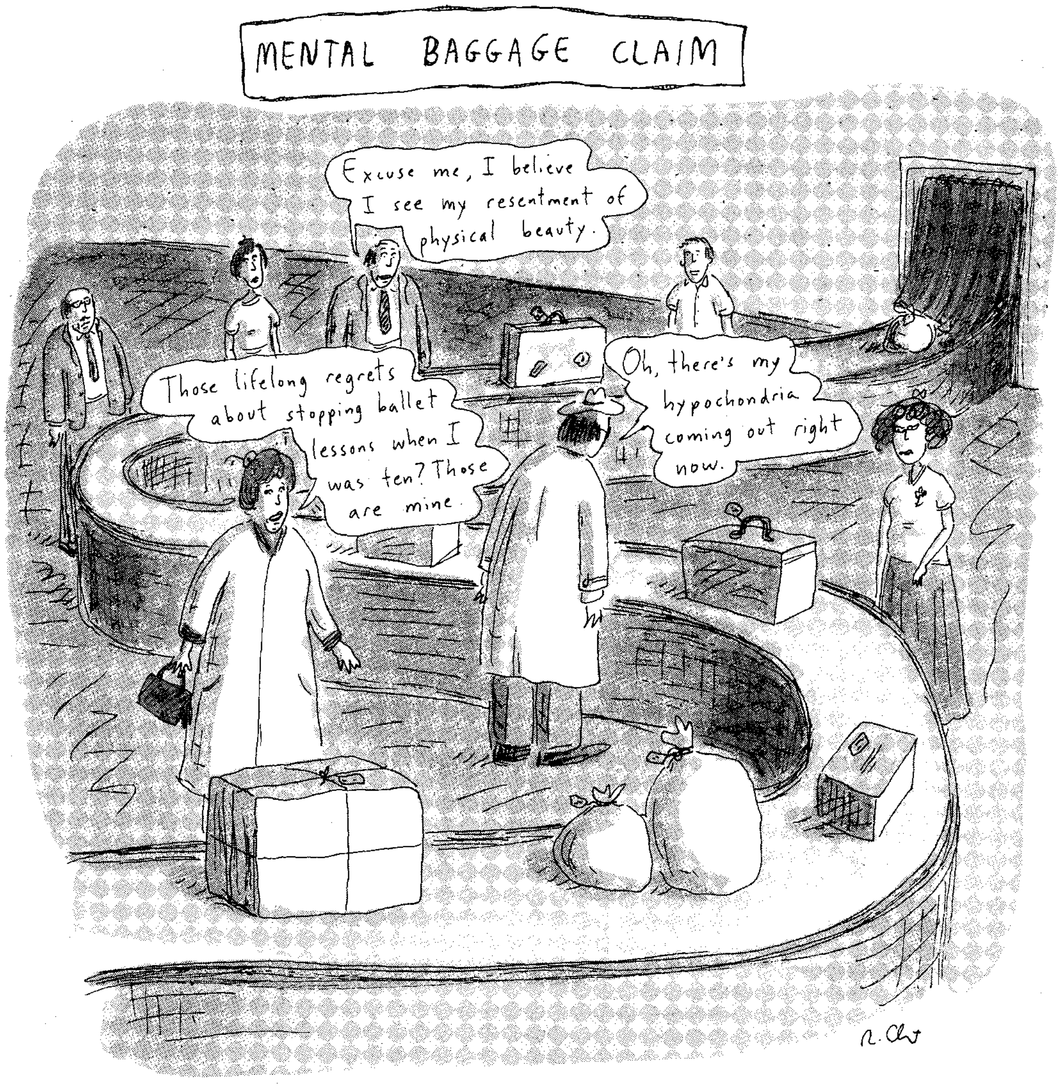
across the lava fields to the lap of Sulfur Peak, where the ground is hot to the touch and sulfur fumes rise in the lengthening light of dawn. Some areas of the earth look raw and scabbed. Without the volcano, there would be no Torishima, and no refuge for the albatrosses. Throughout the oceans of the world, magma from the molten core of the earth pushes up to form volcanic islands like this one. The molten lava solidifies and becomes more stable, and, over the reaches of time, other hot spots produce more volcanic islands, and soon there is a steaming archipelago. This is my first volcano, and I love watching the sulfur fumes dance like djinns. Peter, though, has sought nesting birds around volcanoes all over the world.

“The one time I came close to Torishima, the ship stopped at the Bonin Islands, about three hundred miles south of here,” Peter says when we pause to rest. “I went out in a Zodiac one morning to scout around, as usual. I took a quick look for birds, but there weren’t many, so we all had to devise something else to do. One party went off to do some snorkeling. And there was a volcano, about three thousand feet high, that was just begging to be climbed. So I decided to lead a walk. We must have started off with about fifteen passengers, some of whom were pretty fit, and a couple of staff members, including my friend Mike. I’m good at judging people’s stamina, having done a fair amount of hiking and climbing, and I knew from the start that only two people would make it to the top. So I packed two beers. There was no rock climbing, but the slopes of the volcano were too steep for walking. We were actually on all fours much of the time. A lot of the ash had formed a crust, rather the way snow would, on the side of the mountain. You could almost put your full weight on it, but suddenly your foot would disappear through the upper crust, and you’d sink knee deep into soft ash. That slowed a lot of people down. In fact, by the time we were three-quarters of the way up, nearly all the people had gladly given up and were waving Mike and me on. We got to the top and sat down, absolutely drenched with sweat, but feeling pretty good about it, and looked out across the bay, which was wonderful. There were several coves below us, and the ship at anchor down in a nice blue bay, and little figures running around. I opened my backpack and pulled out two beers, and I said to Mike, ‘Well, you know, I always reckoned there would just be the two of us.’ And I gave him a beer, and we drank. Behind us was a huge crater. We went over and looked down, and couldn’t actually see the bottom—it was lost in thick, choking yellow and red smoke. The gases were so thick they looked almost solid. Well, I suggested to Mike that it might be nice to work out just how far beneath us the bottom was. So we filled our beer cans with sand and then tossed them out into the center of the crater. Mike threw his first, and it went sailing through the air. When it was level with us, we started counting, but it disappeared into the smoke and we couldn’t hear it hit the bottom. So I tossed mine out, and as soon as it was at eye level we started counting again. When it was about halfway down, I guess, there was a sudden huge rumbling. I mean, it sounded like an express train, and the ground started to shake. It went on shaking for what seemed an eternity. I looked down, and my knuckles were white and Mike’s knuckles were white, and neither of us scares easily. All this yellow and red smoke was gushing toward us, and already we were feeling a hot blast pass our cheeks. It was unbelievable. We didn’t say a thing. We turned and ran. Suddenly, I thought of hydrogen sulfide, which is a very dangerous gas. It’s colorless, so I shouted about it to Mike, warned him to keep going and not stop, and, if he felt he was choking, to get down low, because that’s where the only good air would be. Now, I was shouting all this at a run, not knowing if he was


MENTAL BAGGAGE CLAIM
Excuse me, I believe I see my resentment of physical beauty.
Those lifelong regrets about stopping ballet lessons when I was ten? Those are mine.
Oh, there's my hypochondria coming out right now.

earing all of it, part of it, or any of it, ad I wouldn't say panic had set in, but really was every man for himself. We oked behind us, and saw that someing that looked like an atomic bomb ad gone off—a huge plume of red and ellow, with a big mushroom of dust eginning to come up over the side and oll toward us, like waves of yellow otton. We were suddenly conscious of ings falling all around us—bits of ock and ash. Mike looked at me and id, 'Can you ski?' I said no, and he id, 'Just keep your knees bent and ollow me.' With that, Mike launched imself down the side of the mountain, hich, as I said, was so steep you had crawl up it, and he started to slalom own the volcano with his knees bent, iing with his shoes. I was right beind him, and I sort of pitched over everal times, and had to struggle to get p, but I kept on. The others told us ter that from the ship they saw an ruption going on, but all they could e of us was two zigzagging lines of ust zooming down the side of the olcano. Now, what took us something ke three hours to climb up took us nly seventeen minutes to get down. When we reached the bottom, we found that everyone had been evacuated from shore back onto the ship. They sent a Zodiac, and we could see where it was going to land and we ran to it, but dust was raining down and there were pieces of rock falling into the water with red-hot hisses. I mean, it was like something out of Krakatoa. The Zodiac got back to the ship with about an inch of yellow dust on it, and the ship itself was covered with at least an inch—in some places two inches—of the dust. We heaved anchor and sailed out fast, with the volcano still shaking and smoking behind us."

Hoisting his pack, Peter gets ready to set out on the next leg of our climb. "So if you see me looking carefully at the volcano, you'll understand," he says.

As we move across the pungent sulfur fields, I feel the warmth of the island's molten heart through my boots. Steam, like a dragon's breath, rises all around us. In the Moon Desert, where the lava sand blows, each footstep leaves a cloud, as if one's life force were burning right out through the soles of one's feet. Yesterday, we left pouches of water at this spot, and I fall to my knees and hold one of them overhead, pour a long gush of water down my throat, and wash the black dust deeper inside me. Then we continue through the narrow col. Soon we are at the edge of the fortress, and begin the climb down. I'm more tentative than I was yesterday, but I find the first rope easier. At the second, searching out good footholds, I slide down a rock with one foot, carry the second foot around, slide down to another ledge. The next toehold waits below. Stretching, I give the rope a little slack, stretch farther, lower myself, feel toward the spot, then—*Bang!* The floor shoots away underneath me, and, spinning around, I fall backward, my left hand gripping the rope, and smash against sharp rock. Pain butts deep into my back. Below me, Hiroshi has already vanished. Peter, vigilant nearby, looks calm but ready to spring.

"I'm hurt," I call, and the words come out as a long moaning.

He rushes to me, where, in mid-cliff, I am wedged in a basin of rocks, and says, "Breathe deeply. That's better. Get some air in. You looked for a

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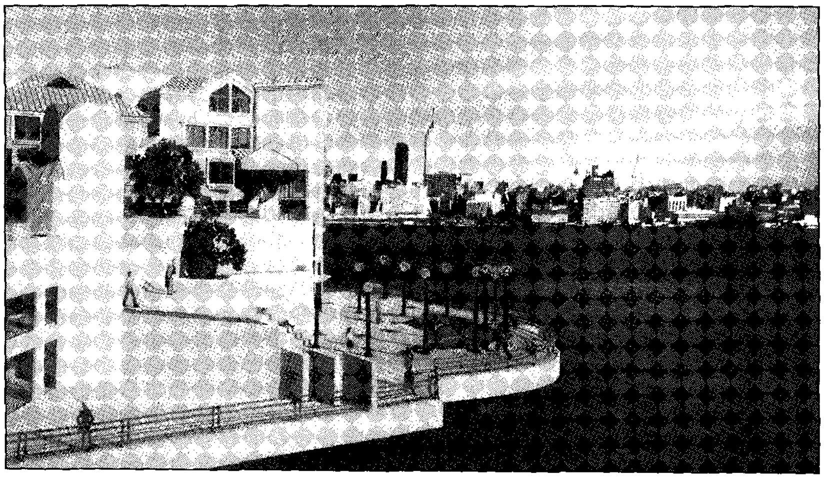

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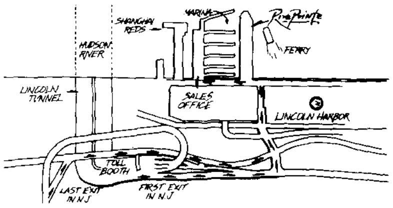

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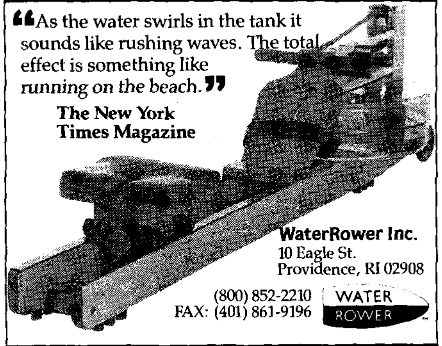

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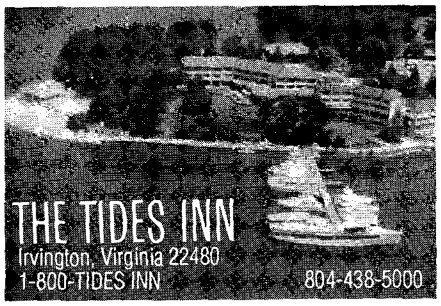

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moment as if you were going to faint."

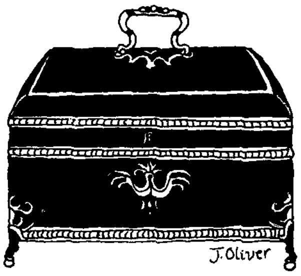
"I think I've cracked a rib," I say. Then, looking at the cliff below and at the cliff above, I whisper, "How will I get out of here?"

Standing below me, Peter checks the best route down, and says, "I know this is going to be painful, but you must turn around and hold on to the rope tightly with your left hand. Your left hand is what will save you."

I turn and grasp the rope.

"Stretch your right foot down to where my feet are," he says. I do. "Now move your left foot below you to the open space there beside those two narrow rocks." He steps down six inches. "Right foot just above where my right foot is. . . ." And so we climb down to where the rock face quits and the lava hill begins. There, struggling to keep my torso straight, I put my hands on his backpack and follow him slowly to the bottom of the dune.

Hiroshi runs forward, anxious and sympathetic. The two men try to pinpoint the pain low on my left side, which has made it impossible for me to bend at the waist, or cough, or speak loudly, or sneeze, or laugh. Later, I will learn that I have broken three ribs, and will be doomed to a life of shallow and painful breaths for some weeks. Guiding me up onto the crest of the lava dune, which is our lookout point, they dig a pit, brace it with knapsacks, and settle me into the hole. When I watch the albatrosses coast overhead, holding the sky up on their wings, and filled with the restless ongoing of their flight, I would not trade my lot for anyone's. Life is too full of easy entrances and exits. I do not welcome this pain, now gnawing at me like a wolf pack, but if that is the toll that *must* be paid it is well spent. Taking a breath, I smile to myself. No wonder they have survived here: I am the proof that their fortress works.

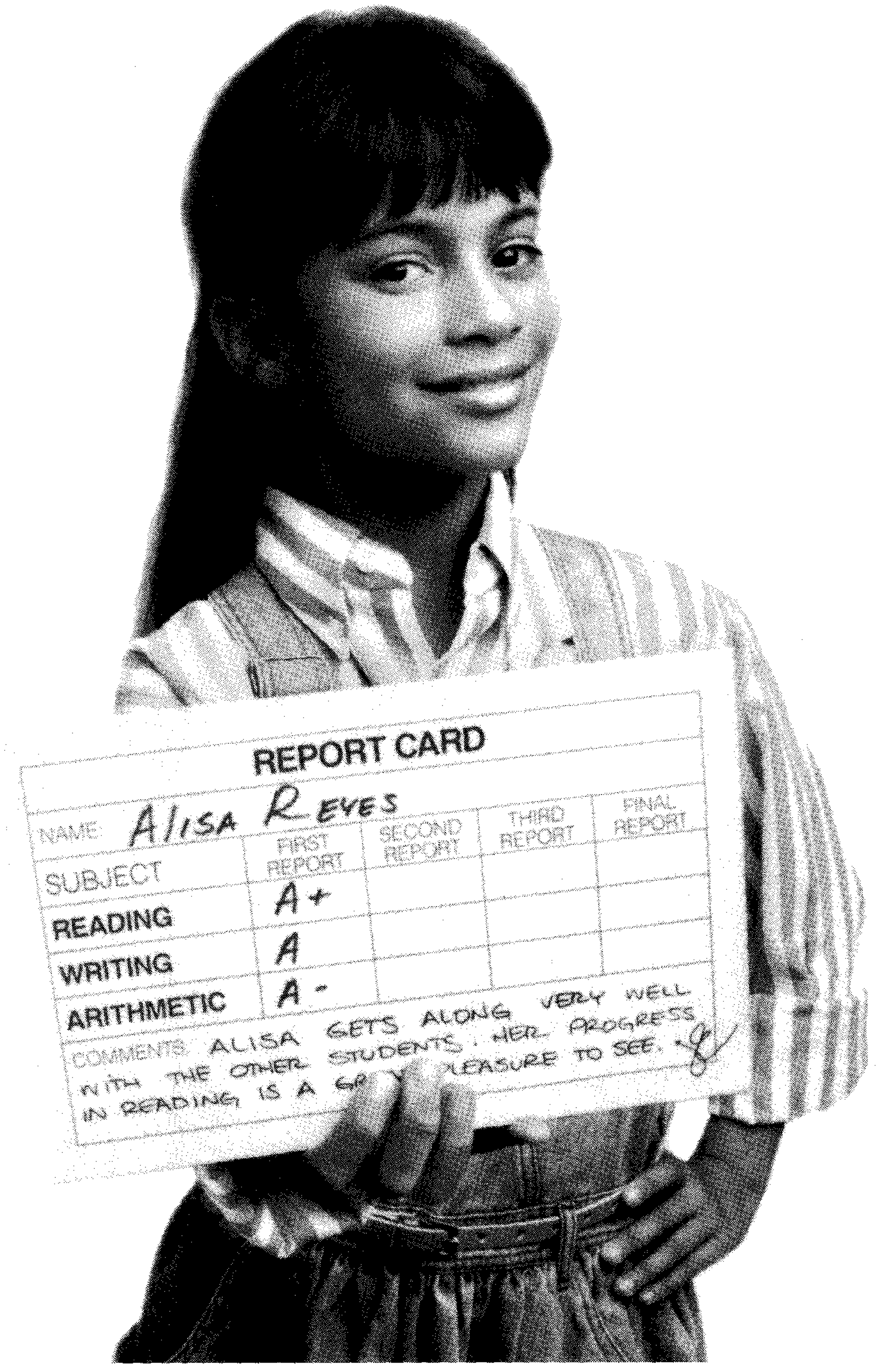


At twilight, when, like monks, we finish our silent beholding, which for each of us is like a form of prayer, we gather up our knapsacks and consider the ascent. Straitjacketed by pain, I cannot move the left side of my body, and yet somehow we must climb back up the cliffs. Hiroshi loops a guide rope high around my shoulders, and Peter lifts me bodily. We are a good team, in distress as in calm. Working togethe the three of us finally emerge from th fortress and climb wearily back dow toward camp.

"A great day, despite everything," tell them, and I mean it. "Who woul drink from a cup when one can drin from the source?"

THE next morning, Peter an Hiroshi set off by themselves, th government men prepare to leave on chartered boat, and I spend the day i camp. The pain has got worse, and can feel bones shifting like mah-jong tiles when I inhale. A fever begins worsens rapidly, and will not relen under an assault of aspirin. The closes hospital is eighteen hours away by fishing boat. With great reluctance, I as one of the government men to take note to Peter and Hiroshi. Then I li down under a heap of clothing an blankets and wait. Deep within m sleeping bag, I watch a few rays o sunlight move through the narro room. The outside world trembles wit light. I dream of blinding-white albatrosses, whose yellow heads sparkle a they whirl in the twilight. Then shape appears at the door. Panting sweat pouring off him, his hair slicke back like a steel helmet, Peter looks a if he has just fallen down a birth canal Taking off his pack, he sits down, an we discuss the various ways off th island, and decide tha the safest is the government charter boat which will be leaving i an hour or so. The feve is mysterious, and ther is no use taking chances Peter is going with me He has already sai goodbye to Hiroshi, wh is staying behind at th fortress, at his post with the albatrosses where he belongs.

With Peter's help, I descend to th water's edge, and soon we are climbing aboard a boat three times as large as th one that ferried us to Torishima. Thi one, only two months old, has stainless-steel fittings, pile carpets, and sleeping bunks; it cruises the islands to th north, mainly on scuba-diving and fishing trips. Before heading back north, the captain circumnavigates th island, and we have a fine view o the bolts of ropy lava where the villag was washed into the sea. Sulfur Peak stretches up raggedly to the blue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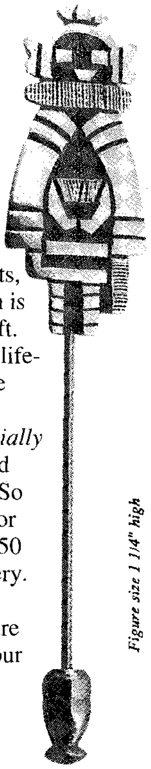

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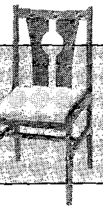

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sky. At last, the fortress of the *ahodori* drifts into view, with its cantilevered walls, its amphitheatre of jagged rock, and its small green apron dotted with white. Surrounded by the frozen cascades of rock, the birds look delicate and fragile.

"The world's population of nesting short-tailed albatrosses," Peter says sadly, but a moment later he grins. We both do, feeling the same indelible thrill at having seen them. "Look, there's Hiroshi!" Peter says, pointing to a lone figure sitting on a dune of lava below a snowstorm of soaring birds. Peter waves to him, and Hiroshi waves back. As the boat turns north, and the sun begins to set in a thick welter of clouds, a recording of "Auld Lang Syne" gushes from the loudspeaker. Short-tailed albatrosses swoop and slide across the wave crests. One dives just off the bow of the boat, picking up speed as it enters the realm of calm air. Now it turns across the wind, skates behind a wave, and then tips its wing, turns upward, rises almost vertically behind the wave crest, tilts around, and then starts across the wind once again, zigzagging at dazzling speed. For some time, we stand in the glow of the setting sun and watch the albatross cartwheel over the waves, changing from white, when it's framed by the dark water, to black, when it's framed by the paler sky. Positive and negative, it dives from the transparent air down to the thick, gelid water and up again, lacing sea and sky together with its swooping flight. It is the wind's way of thinking about itself. At last, it flies straight down the sun street and out toward the horizon, under a tumultuous bruise of sky, and disappears into a bright kingdom of clouds.

—DIANE ACKERMAN

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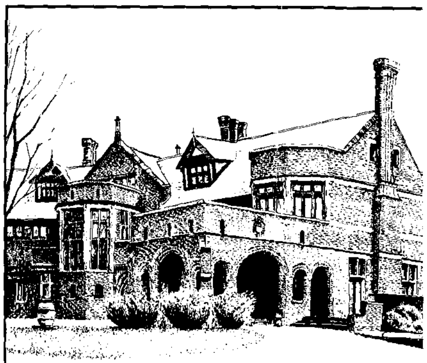

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REPORT FROM BAGHDAD

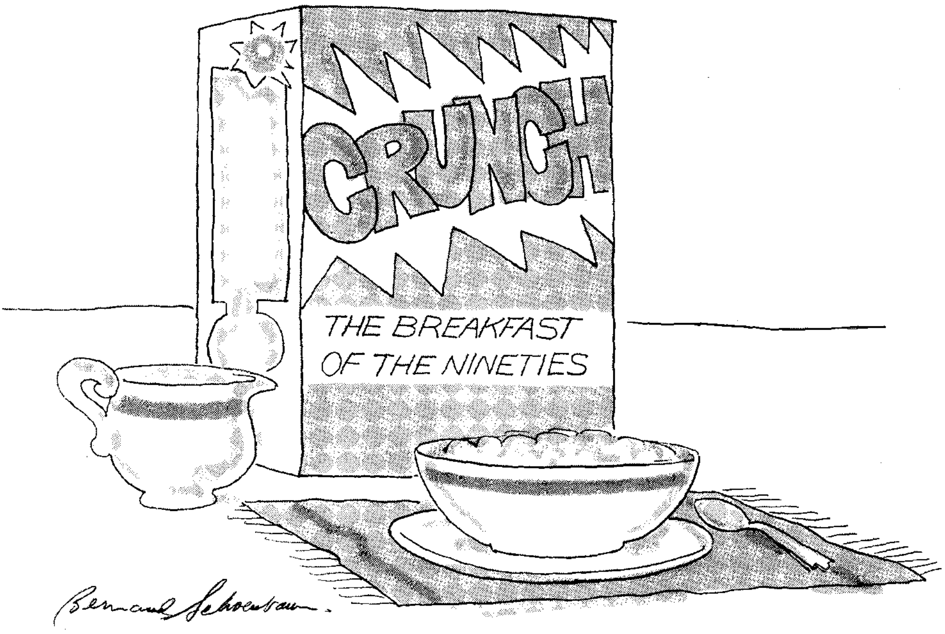
NO one really believed that Jesse Jackson had come to Iraq to be a journalist—not the Iraqis, not the diplomats in the American Embassy with whom he bargained, not the newsmen who followed him around. Not Jackson himself, in fact. He turned his attention to journalism in response o an offer last fall from Time Warner, he communications conglomerate, which proposed to make him the host of his own television show, its format not defined but its nature animated by his powerful personality. In a pilot made last November, Jackson experimented with the Phil Donahue style and decided that he did not like it; he aid he wanted something with a tronger moral theme, with more peronal involvement than just asking questions. Syndicated to TV stations around the country, the show was to give Jackson, who decided late last winter that being mayor of Washingon was not for him, a new career without depriving him of the public platform he had enjoyed for many years as preacher, social activist, and political gadfly.

At the time Iraq seized Kuwait, in early August, Jackson was working with a team of TV professionals in the basement of the NBC affiliate in Washngton, preparing the opening hours of he series. At first, he joined in the popular applause for President Bush's decision to confront the Iraqis—a move he has still not criticized—but as the days passed he spoke increasingly of his concern about the prospect of war. Then, in mid-August, when the Baghdad government announced that it would not permit the Americans and other foreign nationals trapped in Kuwait and Iraq to return home—effectively making hostages of them—his uices began to churn. Jackson could scarcely have forgotten his triumph during the Syrian-American confrontation in 1984, when he travelled to Damascus and persuaded President Hafez al-Assad to release Lieutenant Robert Goodman, the Navy pilot who had been shot down by Syria's armed forces. Was there a chance that he could repeat this achievement? The news from the Persian Gulf presented Jackson with something of an identity crisis. By the rigorous standards of American journalism, he presumably had a duty to avoid emotional entanglements with the material under his scrutiny. Every journalist, of course, falls short of these standards, but Jackson, if he did not reject them entirely, certainly relegated them to a backstage role. He simply disclaimed any duty to remain emotionally detached. He had never intended to renounce his moral commitments because he had a TV show; it was precisely because he could advance those commitments that he was drawn to the job. Jackson decided to go to Baghdad, use journalism as a vehicle to free the hostages, and also try to promote a peaceful resolution of the menacing face-off between America and Iraq.

The Iraqi Embassy in Washington was thrilled with Jackson's proposal, and within two days he had in hand a formal, written invitation to visit Baghdad to interview President Saddam Hussein. At first, Time Warner was enthusiastic about the project. The interview would be turned into a one-time TV special—an excellent way to kick off the series. But while Jackson was preparing his departure Time Warner suddenly turned cold. In conversation, the corporation's executives cited Jackson's budget, which reached the range of half a million dollars after a British benefactor who had promised the use of a private jumbo jet to fly hostages home withdrew the offer, on the ground that the insurance problems were insoluble. From offhand comments, however, Jackson's people concluded that the real explanation was pressure applied by President Bush and the National Security Council, who wanted to deny Hussein the gift of a public platform in the United States. There was also a hint of intimidation of Time Warner, based on several big-money proposals that it had pending before federal agencies. For several days, Jackson fought tenaciously to hold on to his financing, but the veto stuck.

Hurriedly, Jackson's people began shopping elsewhere in search of support. None of the television networks—the natural markets for a Hussein interview—would buy in, however. How much they were influenced by the government is impossible to tell; among their other concerns, no doubt, was the promotion of a competitor to their own news organizations, as well as skepticism about Jackson's credentials as a journalist. Whatever the reasons, by August 26th, a week after Jackson's originally scheduled departure, the project appeared dead, leaving the Iraqis, who had been phoning Jackson several times a day, deeply disappointed. Finally, Jackson's people presented their proposal to Roger and Michael King, of King World Productions, the producer of the Oprah Winfrey show and several well-known game shows, and, on the condition that the budget be severely cut back, they accepted it.

ON Monday, August 27th, Jackson boarded a Royal Jordanian jet at Kennedy Airport and headed east. His entourage numbered fifteen: two television crews, of three men each; two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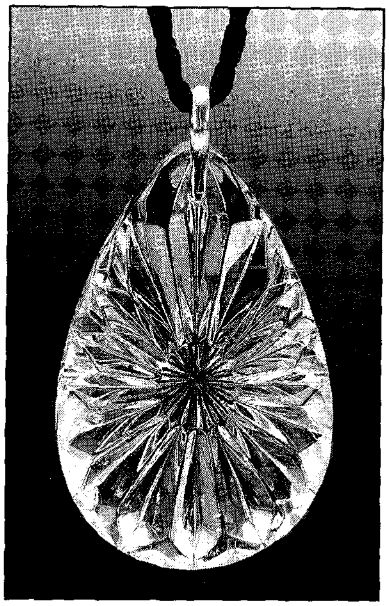

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producers; two still cameramen; a translator; an arrangements manager; Jackson's twenty-seven-year-old son, Jonathan, who was the over-all administrative supervisor; and two journalists. One of the journalists, Marshall Frady, was preparing an article on Jackson. I was the other, having been invited—though I had never met Jackson—because I had written extensively on the Middle East and was willing to brief him on Iraq. Instead of flying in non-stop luxury on a private jet to Baghdad, the entire group was travelling tourist; the airline, though, did find a few spare seats in first class for Jackson and his immediate circle. In Amman, on Tuesday morning, Jackson was received regally by Crown Prince Hassan, who is the brother of Jordan's King Hussein; the King himself was off touring the Arab world in search of a peace formula. Jackson's talk with the Prince on Jordanian TV a few hours later—followed by a sumptuous Bedouin dinner, over which the Prince presided—was the first of an endless series of appearances before the cameras during the week. Jackson loved this high-level attention. Once, when I twitted him for not running for mayor in Washington, he retorted, half mockingly, "Would you rather cover me here or in the Eighth Precinct, checking out flooded basements?" The next morning, the group boarded an Iraqi Air jet—two daily flights to Amman are Iraq's only regular contact with the outside world—for the one-hour flight to Baghdad.

Jackson received the first indication of the Iraqis' view of him early the next morning, at a meeting in the office of Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz. Jackson stated firmly at the start, and repeatedly thereafter, that he was present in his capacity as a journalist, and in response Aziz chuckled knowingly. Aziz is by far the most sophisticated member of Iraq's top echelon, and he obviously believed that Jackson, having twice been a serious Presidential candidate, could not possibly have come to Baghdad simply as a journalist. More than once during the three-and-a-half-hour session, Aziz expressed gratitude that a man of Jackson's stature would make the long journey to Baghdad to hear the other side. He said that it was because of the importance Iraq attached to Jackson that he was to have a dialogue with Saddam Hussein himself. At that time, Jackson did not know tha CBS's Dan Rather was in town, anc would scoop him on a Hussein interview, but he would eventually learr that Rather did not have nearly the off-camera time with Hussein that h had. Jackson was the most prominent American to visit Iraq since th crisis began, Aziz said, and that assessment led him to conclude that other would soon follow. At one point, Azi even hinted rather broadly that h thought Jackson might be a secre emissary from President Bush

In his talk Aziz made no effor to conceal the seriousness wit which Iraq was taking the confrontation with the Unite States. "This is more frightening t Iraq than the eight years of war wit Iran," he said. The statement surprise me, given the bravado with which other Iraqis, most notably Sadda Hussein, had embellished the prospec of a war with the West. Aziz spoke o Iraq's move on Kuwait as "what th West calls aggression," but he did not in the course of the interview, deny th accuracy of that characterization What Aziz went on to say was tha those who called it aggression had shown no readiness in the weeks befor the invasion to accord a hearing t Iraq's case, much less to do anything about it. He said that a few days befor the Iraqi Army made its move Saddam Hussein had summoned April Glaspie, the American Ambassador in Baghdad, and had given her a full account of how Iraq's accumulating grievances against Kuwait were leading to a showdown. Hussein had assured Glaspie, Aziz said, that Iraq would not attack—but only as long as negotiations held out some promise of resolving the dispute. After the invasion, he said, President Bush had distorted this assurance to accuse Saddam of being a liar—a charge Bush has made repeatedly since.

"For ten years, Iraq was rich, but not in the style of the sheikhs of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait," Aziz said, in impeccable English. Aziz has a college degree in English studies and was an editor at several Baath Party newspapers throughout the revolutionary era of the nineteen-fifties and sixties. A member of Iraq's tiny Christian minority, he was the target of an assassination attempt by Ayatollah Khomeini's fundamentalist Muslim followers in 1980—an event that helped precipitate the Iran-Iraq War. "We spent our ichness for schools, houses, hospitals, oads and bridges, and industrial complexes, not villas on the Riviera, like ie Saudis and the Kuwaitis," he went n. "Since our revolution of July, 968, we have been working day and ight to improve the standard of living f our people. Then Khomeini came long, threatening to destroy all that e did. We had to defend our country nd our achievements. But in protecting ourselves we also protected the eople—as well as the sovereignty and ealth—of the Gulf States, which ere more vulnerable than we were. They accumulated fortunes while we aved them with the blood of our sons. They invested tens of billions in the Vest during the war, and though they rovided us with financial help, we pent it to fight, not to promote our conomy. The Gulf States kept the nore than forty billion dollars that they ent us on the books as a loan. Frankly, ow we are stunned at the Kuwaiti nsistence that it be repaid.

"The economic question was a major actor in triggering the current situaion," Aziz said, after a pause. "In ddition to the forty billion dollars in rab debts, we owe at least as much to he West. This year's state budget equired seven billion dollars for debt ervice, which was a huge amount, eaving us with only enough for basic ervices for our country. Our budget is ased on a price of eighteen dollars a arrel for oil, but since the Kuwaitis egan flooding the world with oil the rice has gone down by a third. No overnment—not ours or the American government—could sustain a loss f income of that magnitude. We sent missaries to the Kuwaitis, and hey replied that they would do vhat they liked. There are only even hundred thousand citizens f Kuwait, and they are all milionaires. Some are billionaires. Kuwait ias some two hundred and twenty billion dollars in assets in foreign counries." Most estimates put this figure at ibout a hundred billion dollars. 'There are many theories about why hey forced down the price, but it comes o one thing: they did it to satisfy their wn greed. And in the process they vere destroying Iraq.

"In May, at an Arab League summit n Baghdad, we brought up these maters. Saddam was very conciliatory—nore than I, as Foreign Minister, wanted him to be. King Hussein pleaded for help, because of the poverty of his country. Arafat cried for the people in the Occupied Territories. Saddam tried to appeal to the sense of fairness of the Saudis and the Kuwaitis. We said this was a war of economic sabotage waged against us and the poor Arabs. But nothing changed.

"After the summit, Saddam proposed a meeting of oil ministers, who got together on July 10th and assured us of some relief. But the Kuwaiti oil minister promised to refrain from overproduction for only two months, which meant nothing, since the market was glutted. On July 15th, our government sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the Arab League with a list of grievances against Kuwait. We said that Kuwait's actions were the equivalent of aggression. We warned that Iraq could not put up with this practice much longer. We had to protect our lives. When we met again—in Jidda, at the end of July—Kuwait said it was not interested in any change. We were now desperate, and could not pay our bills for food imports. It was a starvation war. When do you use your military power to preserve yourself? Iraq will not become a beggar state. We are a dignified people with a five-thousand-year-old civilization. Obviously, King Fahd, in Saudi Arabia, didn't care if we were hungry, and none of those leaders who denounce us now seemed to care about finding a solution.

"We reached the conclusion that this was a conspiracy to destroy Iraq. But Kuwait was too small to do this without backing from a superpower. Weren't the Kuwaitis supported and encouraged by some other country? Who was the backer? We saw a conspiracy to bring about the economic collapse of Iraq, followed by its political collapse and a change of regime. This was more threatening to us than an attack by Israel, against which we could retaliate. We had to challenge this conspiracy. We tried until August 1st to settle this matter without force, and then we acted."

"Conspiracy" being an overworked word in the Arab vocabulary, my first reaction to these last remarks by Aziz was to dismiss them. But then I recalled an observation made in Amman by Prince Hassan, who normally speaks with great prudence, to the effect that Kuwait's emirs had been behaving very strangely since the reflagging episode

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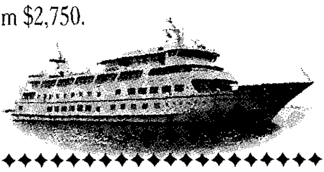

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of 1987, when their tankers were placed under the protection of the American Navy. It was as if they had suddenly felt themselves to be invulnerable. While the confrontation with Iraq intensified, a story circulated in the Gulf that Kuwait's royal family had instructed its armed forces to plan to hold out for only twenty-four hours, after which the Americans would be fighting at their side. Certainly President Bush has left little doubt in his public statements that his aim is to overthrow Hussein. One need not go terribly far to find a reason. Bush considers Hussein, with an army of a million men in close proximity to the world's most productive oil fields, a major threat to international economic stability. Bush has said that, whatever the outcome of the current crisis, this threat will remain as long as Hussein is in power, and will get worse as the Iraqi Army's capacity for waging chemical—and perhaps nuclear—war grows. Is it too farfetched to wonder whether there was something *cooking* between the White House and Kuwait? For most of a century, Kuwait was the linchpin of Britain's domination of the Gulf. Aziz suggested that it had become America's linchpin. Iraqis were convinced, he said, that the United States, seeking to impose its own order on the region, had come to the Gulf planning to stay. (According to news reports from Baghdad a few days after we left, Secretary of State James Baker's proposal for a "regional security structure" served as proof to the Iraqis that America's aim was a permanent military presence in the Gulf.)

Having met Aziz many times before, I knew he did not speak frivolously. Though no outsider can say exactly how Iraqi policy is made, it seemed apparent to me that he and the Foreign Ministry represented the rational side of the process. Aziz is not a softie. He can hold to a tough position as tenaciously as any hard-liner anywhere. But he and those around him are nicely educated and well-travelled men. They understand, and may even endorse—as Hussein clearly does not—global trends toward democracy and human rights. They communicate easily with the world at large. It seemed to me that Aziz's words were meant as a plea to Americans to examine the current crisis from Iraq's perspective, and to contemplate the possibility that there is at least some justice on its side. For Westerners, however, it is difficult to concede credibility to a government with the reputation of Hussein's.

Near the end of his presentation, Aziz was asked, "How can Iraq expect a sympathetic hearing on its intentions when we Americans have embedded in our memories your government's gassing of its Kurdish citizens in 1988, its hanging of a journalist for a British newspaper early this year, and the recurring intemperance in the remarks of your leadership?"

Aziz remained conspicuously silent for a few moments as, seemingly, he struggled for an answer. Finally, he shrugged, and said, "I admit, that's a problem."

On the evening of the meeting with Aziz, Jackson was invited to a private session with Saddam Hussein, on which the rest of the group was later briefed. On Jackson's initiative, the conversation had turned to Jesus, with whose martyrdom Hussein claimed to identify; both he and Jesus, he said, were victims of willful misjudgment. Hussein acknowledged issuing an order for all foreign nationals to be taken into custody; he called it a guarantee of peace. He characterized the Western blockade of food and medicine as more heartless than the hostage-taking. At the same time, he declared defiantly that if the United States launched an "unjust, unfair, tyrannical" war Iraq would fight back to the last man and would ultimately win.

The subject that evoked Hussein's greatest passion, however, was Bush's refusal to talk with him. He said that the negotiating proposal he made on August 12th had taken him to the "limits of my creativity," and that he was aghast when the American Embassy in Baghdad, ignoring common diplomatic courtesy, had not even requested an official transcript. Hussein spoke heatedly, Jackson said, about the insult to Iraq of America's refusal to pay attention to his overtures, which he described as an invitation to a dialogue that could bring the Kuwait crisis to a conclusion short of war. Hussein said that the United States had adopted the condescending pose of an imperial power dealing with a colony. Jackson noted that Hussein looked tired, and recalled that at one point he summoned a military aide to bring a special chair to relieve pain in his back. After fifty minutes, Jackson said, Hussein excused himself, explaining that it was time to say his prayers.

ON Friday, Jackson and his entourage, along with a handful of Western reporters who had found their way to Baghdad, flew to Kuwait aboard an Iraqi Air jet that Hussein, the day before, had agreed to place at Jackson's disposal. Hussein's celebrated decree authorizing the release of foreign *women and children was now a* few days old, but none of them had left the country. Whatever Hussein's intentions, his bureaucracy had apparently been given no instructions on putting the decree into effect, and the bureaucrats, it seems, were going to take no chances that might leave them out on a limb. Apart from our being the firs Westerners to visit the beleaguered Kuwait City, it was not clear why we were going to Kuwait. Jackson, however, recognized the decree as a key and he was determined to use the visi to open the door and let at least some of the hostages through.

We reached Kuwait after an hour's flight, and were met on a desolate airstrip by a few functionaries in civilian dress carrying pistols on their hips They had cars ready, which whisked us over empty freeways—virtually the only vehicles we saw were hulks abandoned on the shoulders—to a luxury hotel directly across the street from the compound of the American Embassy We knew, of course, that the Iraqis having officially annexed Kuwait no longer recognized the Embassy's status. They had cut off its water and electricity, and permitted no deliveries of food. We had been told that inside were nine or ten diplomats and about forty Americans who had been given asylum, and that the conditions in which they lived had deteriorated seriously. But communications between the Embassy and the outside were limited, so that was all we knew.

Barred by the Iraqis from entering the compound, Jackson picked up a phone in the hotel and, after twenty minutes or so, made contact with Barbara Bodine, the Embassy's deputy chief of mission. The Iraqis who were watching over us—they claimed they were Army, but, with big bellies and half-shaven faces, they looked to me more like *mukhabarat*, or secret police —had proposed that the Ambassador

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and Bodine come to us for a talk. They promised to guarantee the security and safe return of any American who left the compound, but Bodine, wary of a trap, refused the offer, and during the ensuing two hours Jackson haggled with the Iraqis over the terms of a visit. Meanwhile, Jackson's camera crews installed themselves on the hotel roof and shot pictures of the compound's interior. The deal that Jackson finally made was that, accompanied by one person and a camera crew, he would meet the Ambassador and Bodine at the Embassy entrance. The encounter—through the bars of the Embassy's turnstile gate—was brief and produced little of substance, but it probably brought some comfort to those within while also bringing some news to the world without. When it was over, we scrambled into cars for a tour of downtown Kuwait City, where the most interesting sight was off-duty Iraqi soldiers lounging on street corners, apparently unconcerned about snipers or bombers. Otherwise, we saw little physical damage to the buildings, and almost no people.

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Where you have just woken up and don't know why

Until you hear the scratch on the screen of rain
Falling ten years before from a sky still blue
As if to frame yet another way of saying goodbye.

—Ron Horning

• •

SHORTLY after arriving back at the hotel in Baghdad, Jackson received a call saying that Latif Nusayif Jassem, the Minister of Culture and Information, wanted to see him in his office in an hour. The caller did not say why. I was among the half dozen others in the group also invited to come along. I had met Jassem on previous trips. He is a powerful man in the ruling hierarchy, but his conversation is generally limited to ideological proclamations and Party slogans, which make meetings rather tedious. By its tone, however, the call seemed to announce a command appearance, and so, at seven-fifteen, we dutifully lined up on the steps of the hotel to wait for our limousines. Jassem received us in his spacious office, and had us sit down, Jackson at his elbow, on overstuffed sofas. He then engaged us in what, in official Iraqi circles, passes for small talk, while aides mysteriously shuffled in and out, handing him memos. After fifteen minutes, Jassem stood up abruptly and said we were going on a tour of Baghdad—an announcement that left us more puzzled than before—and for an hour we drove aimlessly through the city, its animated streets showing no signs of preparation for war. Finally, we passed through a gate, followed a long driveway that intersected beautiful, illuminated gardens, and pulled up to the portico of a grand building that had been planned to house the Iraqi kings. It was still not finished when the last of them was overthrown and murdered in 1958. The building was now the palace of Saddam Hussein.

We entered through a huge rotunda with a dome of carved white stone and were shown into a ballroom with wood-mosaic floors, Oriental carpets, glittering chandeliers, and French inlaid furniture. In the center were four chairs and two cameras, arranged for a TV interview. Jackson had been informed that, for security reasons, his meeting would be filmed by Hussein's cameramen, using their own equipment. Jackson's crews were unhappy with the dictum, and his producers reported that though the cameras, Japanese-made, were of excellent quality, Iraqi TV techniques were dated and would not appeal to American audiences. Hussein's terms, however, were take it or leave it, and Jackson took it.

A few minutes after our arrival, Hussein entered the ballroom from an adjacent hall, surrounded by uniformed men. Instead of taking a seat before the cameras, however, he proposed that we first have tea in another room. He wore a handsome blue suit and a matching blue tie; in contrast, his shoes were well worn and unshined. His face was paunchier than I had remembered from his pictures, and his voice, at a middle pitch, was thinner than I had anticipated. Still, there was something about him that evoked the strength of a lifetime revolutionary: he was a man wh volunteered at twenty-two to assassinate the head of state, and had bee wounded in his successful escape fro Iraq after the attempt failed, and ha then lived for years in exile. A small town boy, Hussein was the product of society that was in many ways sti primitive and violent. Preoccupie with the revolutionary struggle, he ha rarely travelled outside the Arab worl had never overcome his native insularity, and had acquired few of the nicetie of social intercourse. Now he looke distracted as he sat down next to Jackson and began sipping his tea. He trie to make a joke, telling Jackson tha fond though he was of him as a politician, he did not know if he would lik him as a journalist. Somehow, he noticed as he talked that I, having foolishly left my briefcase in the car, wa taking notes on the back of an envelope He motioned to an aide, who then wen out; he reappeared a few minutes late carrying a pad, which he silently handed to me.

By any standard, Jackson's interview with Hussein—like Dan Rather' —was not successful. Hussein is a poo television performer. He is relentlessl deadpan. His eyes shift back and fort in search of familiar faces around th room. His posture is poor, perhaps because of discomfort in his back. He i obviously tense. What is worse, he fail to make his points clearly, and ofte falls back on clichés and jargon. Iraqi say that Hussein speaks a rough, colloquial Arabic that the masses love, bu in translation his prose comes out grat

g, sometimes vulgar, and often mud-
ed. Jackson was a tough but fair
estioner, and he gave Hussein more
an ample opportunity to make his
se. But the case Hussein made fre-
ently came down to fulminations
ainst conspiracies, on the part of
mericans, Kuwaitis, Saudis, and, of
urse, Zionists.

Hussein did try to lay out Iraq's
storical claim to Kuwait, which is by
means negligible. The historical
cord makes clear, after all, that Ku-
ait, once nominally part of the Otto-
an province that is now southern
aq, was cut off from Ottoman control
the British for the sole purpose of
warting any challenge from first the
urks and the Germans, and later the
aqis, to their own supremacy in the
ulf. Kuwait's northern border, where
abuts Iraq, is the site of the Rumaila
l fields; this border has been disputed
the Iraqis throughout the modern
riod. Currently, Iraq's only outlet to
e sea lies under foreign guns, Iranian
well as Kuwaiti. Thus Iraqis are not
tally inaccurate in calling Kuwait a
rt of the homeland. But Hussein's
esentation was less than deft, and by
e time he finished it his points were
st in his convolutions.

As for America's rushing into the
ulf, Hussein argued that the facts
iled to sustain President Bush's ex-
anation. Far from plotting annexa-
on, he said, Iraq—whatever its his-
rical rights—had limited its original
mands on Kuwait to ending the
armful manipulation of oil prices. If
e royal family had acted in a spirit of
rab brotherhood, he said, there would
ot have been an invasion at all. As for
udi Arabia, it was never in danger.
Saudi Arabia is an independent sover-
gn state, as independent as Iraq," he
id. "Unlike Kuwait, it was never part
Iraq. . . . We have a non-aggression
ct with Saudi Arabia, which we fully
spect. . . . Within a few days after we
tered Kuwait, the Iraqi armed forces
ok defensive positions, which the
nited States satellites could easily de-
ct. The Americans knew that we did
ot mean to invade." Hussein argued
at Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were
mply pretexts for the basing of Amer-
an forces in the Gulf. The Saudis will
on learn, he said, that when the crisis
over the Americans will not depart.
The Kuwait issue was just a cover for
merican occupation," he added. He
jected the right of the United States

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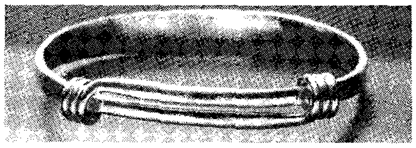

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to intervene in disputes that were essentially Arab. If there is to be a diplomatic resolution of the Kuwait invasion, he said, he is willing to pursue it, but the search should be left in Arab hands.

Jackson ended the interview, when it had already lasted more than twice as long as the one hour that Hussein had agreed to, with a series of needling questions on the hostages. It may have been during these questions that Hussein said that the Americans in Kuwait who failed to turn themselves in to the Iraqi authorities risked being treated as spies. He had made the statement first over tea, then repeated it on camera, but it did not appear on the cassette that was turned over to Jackson's producers. Apparently, he had had second thoughts about the threat. By that point in the interview, Hussein was evidently tired, and when Jackson asked whether, as a gesture in the interests of peace, he was willing to release any hostages immediately, he answered irascibly, "I have addressed this matter in more than one interview and with more than one journalist. I have made my position clear, and there is nothing more to add."

I was sure Hussein was angry when he rose sternly from his chair, but he filled the next instant with an epiphany. "It has been a good evening, and we have had a deep human exchange," Hussein said, shaking Jackson's hand vigorously, "and in honor of the Americans who see us on television . . . you will take the women and children who are allowed to leave, along with four of the men who appear to be sick, on an Iraqi aircraft that will fly you to the United States." Obviously, this was not a spontaneous gesture; it was a calculated move to reduce the international pressure that had been building over the hostage issue. But Jackson was surprised, and all of us left the room with our heads buzzing. We also began to wonder almost immediately how, in the confusion over where the hostages were, Hussein would deliver on the offer.

Jackson raced back to the hotel after the meeting and put in a call to Lawrence Eagleburger, the Deputy Secretary of State, in Washington. The State Department, following the lead of the White House, had been less than enthusiastic about Jackson's plans, but had given him a cursory briefing before he left, and had wished him well. Jackson asked Eagleburger over the phon to secure landing rights for the Iraq Air flight, not only in Washington bu also in Paris and London, wher Hussein's aides had said there would b groups of hostages disembarking Whatever Eagleburger thought of th project, he promised to attend to th formalities, and he did—though th State Department had not a word o thanks for Jackson when he returned (The press was hardly more gracious and gave only perfunctory coverage t his role.) That was the first of a serie of transatlantic talks that kept Jackso awake the entire night.

Meanwhile, one of Jackson's aide had picked up a call that had arrived o another phone from Hamed Hammadi Hussein's secretary, who proposed t verify the identification of the hostage who were eligible for evacuation. H was working from a list that Jackso had given him in the palace. It ha been prepared by the American Embassy in Baghdad, and contained th names of twenty-one women and children thought to be in the Embassy i Kuwait, but it was acknowledged to b incomplete. The list also contained th names of five sick men, and those presented a problem, because Hussein, perhaps inadvertently, had said that onl four men could leave. After a fev minutes of talk, the aide put down th phone and announced to our assemble group that Hammadi expected Jackso to choose the four. The reaction in th room was instantaneous. This wa Sophie's Choice. This was th Judenrat of the Lodz Ghetto. Jackso picked up the phone and calmly tol Hammadi that we would be taking al five. There followed a quarter hour o negotiations, and by the time it wa over Hammadi had given his consent

THE next morning, we got back o the plane for Kuwait, where w were to pick up as many hostages as w could. Then we would return to Baghdad to board several hundred more who would be waiting. Among ou passengers were four Iraqi doctors who were to examine the men on th list to verify their illness. Also on boar was an American foreign-service officer, a junior member of the Embassy i Baghdad, who was to serve as liaiso with the Embassy in Kuwait. Our departure, originally scheduled for eleven, was delayed for nearly two hour while Jackson persuaded the Iraqis t everse what he considered an arbitrary an on members of the press. (The raqis are congenitally suspicious of the ress.) It was two o'clock when we anded in Kuwait, and nearly three vhen we reached the hotel. After Jackson made contact with the Embassy, he four doctors set off on their "mission of mercy." The liaison officer, a imid young man, who seemed overwhelmed by his task, then took the hone for a series of conversations vith the Embassy, presumably to complete the list of hostages who were eady to depart. Those of us who ad no responsibilities for the ay's operations sat around the obby drinking coffee and waiting.

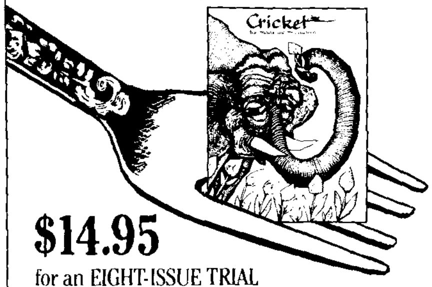
About four o'clock, a new crisis rupted—one that showed Jackson at is best. An employee of the hotel ipped him off to the presence in a hird-floor room of an American woman who had been hiding from the Iraqi ecurity police for some days. A former nember of the hotel staff, she was in ill iealth and desperately wanted to get iome. Jackson quietly sent one of our roup to tell her we would try for her elease, but a few minutes later the raqis got wind of what was happening nd dispatched two of their men to rrest her. Over the next three hours, he woman—Faryel Allen, of Gainesville, Florida—was on a roller coaster etween liberation and incarceration vhile Jackson went head-to-head with he Iraqi authorities.

The hotel managers, who had been iving with those authorities since the nvasion, a month before, insisted that his was a battle that Jackson could not vin, but he was tireless. Wherever the raqis went in the spacious lobby, he ollowed in their footsteps, and though hey did not give in, neither did they reak off the talks. Even after the four loctors returned with their approval or the medical evacuees, and while ensions were rising palpably among he dozens of people milling about, ackson continued to talk. The rest of ur group reached a unanimous decision that he should tell the Iraqis we vould remain in Kuwait until Allen vas released, but Jackson said reproachfully that he would not entertain he use of coercion. As nearly as I could rasp it, his technique consisted of measured drafts of pleading, rational argument, cajolery, flattery, and moral mportuning. But he also made use of ur pledge to let the Iraqis know—though there was no menace in the way he told them—that we could not possibly go home without Allen. It was almost seven when he and the Iraqis emerged, arm in arm, smiling blissfully, from an office they had commandeered and announced that Allen would indeed be released. When Jackson came down in the elevator a few minutes later with the woman at his side, many cheered, but more than a few wiped tears from their eyes. Standing together, he and the Iraqi officials declared a victory for humanity.

With Jackson and Allen leading the way, the visitors from Baghdad marched across the street to the Embassy compound, where Barbara Bodine waited inside a glass booth that is normally the province of a Marine guard. She and Jackson greeted each other cordially, after which she read out, one by one, the names of those who were ready to depart. One by one, the released hostages emerged through the turnstile gate, joyous in their freedom. When everyone on the list had come out, Jackson asked if there were any more who were eligible. Bodine replied that there were three women and two children who had not been listed. Maybe it was unfair to blame the young liaison officer, though the lapse seemed to be his, but it seems likely that if Jackson had known about those five early in the day he could have negotiated their departure, too. Now it was dark, everyone was exhausted, and it seemed impossible to reopen the bargaining that had concluded so thrillingly half an hour before. The Iraqi functionaries, still feeling magnanimous, promised that the release of the five would be expedited, but at that point no one had any idea when the next plane would stop in Kuwait to take them home.

Once the transaction was finally over, Jackson led the entire group—hostages, doctors, reporters, his own entourage—in prayer. Then, with exultation but also with a bit of grieving for those who stayed behind, the group filled the waiting cars and headed for the Kuwait airport. When the plane landed in Baghdad, an Iraqi Air 747 was waiting, with twenty-seven Americans already aboard, along with the French and British hostages who had been held in Baghdad hotels. It took off without further ado, carrying some three hundred passengers on their journey home.

—Milton Viorst



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Martin Scorsese's "GoodFellas" has a lift. It's like "Raging Bull," except that it's not domineering. It's like "Raging Bull" made in a jolly, festive frame of mind. It's about being a guy and guys getting high on being a guy. In the Nicholas Pileggi book "Wiseguy," which this movie is based on, the Mafia-led mobsters are moral runts—and that was the joke of how John Huston showed them, from the Don on down, in "Prizzi's Honor." But Scorsese, a rap artist keeping up the heat, doesn't go in for ironic detachment. He loves the Brooklyn gang milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. His mobsters are high on having a wad of cash in their pockets. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering.

Is it a great movie? I don't think so. But it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism presented with the brio of drama. Every frame is active and vivid, and you can feel the director's passionate delight in making these pictures move. When Henry Hill (Ray Liotta), the central character, crosses a Long Island street to beat up the man who tried to put the make on his girl, the dogwood is in bloom, and all through this movie we're aware of the ultra-greenness of the suburbs that the gangsters live in; these thieves are always negotiating their way through shrubs and hedges. Or they're preparing food, ceremonially, gregariously—stirring vats of sauce, slicing garlic razor thin. We see them in bars and restaurants, where they take preferential treatment as their due, and in the tacky interiors of their noisy homes. We see them hijacking, fencing stolen goods, fixing horse races, shaking down restaurant owners, committing arson, preparing cargo thefts at the airport, burying murder victims. And the different aspects of their lives are like operatic motifs.

What's missing? Well, there are no great voices. The script, by Pileggi and Scorsese, isn't really dramatized; instead, Scorsese raises the volume on the music, and the guys work themselves up, get hard, erupt. This isn't the kind of mindless movie that offers up brutality as entertainment, with good guys versus bad guys. Scorsese offers up brutal racketeering and says this is all there is to these men. Scorsese's Jake La Motta could do one thing: fight. These guys can do one thing: steal.

The book is an account of the life of the actual Henry Hill, as he told it to Pileggi after he entered the Federa Witness Protection Program, and the movie picks up his story in 1955, with the obliging eleven-year-old kid, half-Irish, half-Sicilian, working as an errand boy at the cabstand hangout of the Brooklyn neighborhood gang headed by Paulie (Paul Sorvino). As the gang's pet, Henry gets the approval he wants and plenty of spending money by the time he's fourteen, he's on the payroll of a construction company and knows the ins and outs of the rackets In the years ahead, crime is a romp for him. He gets a real charge out of pulling scams side by side with his older pals, Jimmy (Robert De Niro) and Tommy (Joe Pesci), and when he takes his Jewish girlfriend, Karen (Lorraine Bracco), to flashy, expensive places he hands out big tips and is greeted as a celebrity. (He's twenty-one.) Karen who's no bimbo (she has a sense of her worth), likes the danger that emanates from him. His life has the look of a Puerto Rican Day parade crossed with a rock concert; she's excited when she sees his gun (the gun he slugged his rival with). In "Raging Bull," the young male tries to ram his way through a brick wall; in "GoodFellas," the young male finds a welcoming warm spot, first with Paulie and the gang, and soon with Jimmy and Tommy, and then with his wife—Karen—and a couple of kids, and a mistress set up in an apartment.

It's a little off key when Henry reacts to Tommy and Jimmy's acts of violence with puzzled revulsion. During a card game, Joe Pesci's Tommy, clowning around, shoots a teen-ager who's slow to serve him a drink. Incidents like this—they're terrifically well framed—appear to be pointing toward an awakening sensibility in Henry, but nothing comes of them, so they seem perfunctory, a sop to conventionality. (De Niro has a scene where he goes berserk, and that doesn't develop into anything, either.)

The movie's underpinnings could have been linked together: they suggest that the

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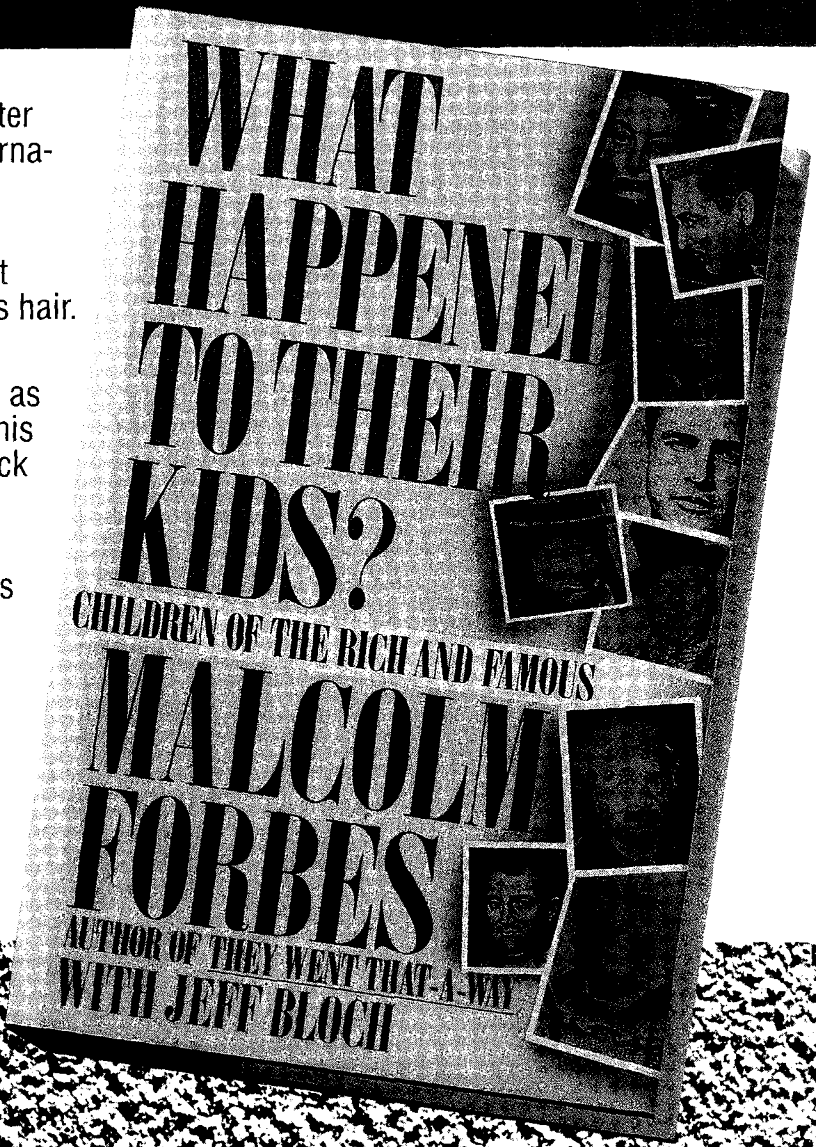
- Benjamin Franklin's son was arrested as a British spy.
- Mozart's son used Salieri as a job reference.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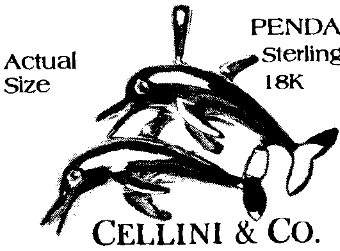

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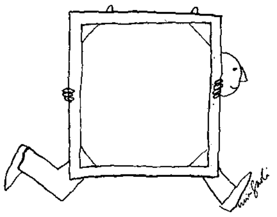
Mafia and other organized-crime gangs are continually being destroyed from within by raw male lawlessness. De Niro's Jimmy brings off the theft of a lifetime—the six-million-dollar Lufthansa heist, until then the biggest cash robbery in United States history—but he can't control his troops; they're so undisciplined, such small-timers at heart, that they start spending ostentatiously, and paranoiac Jimmy, who wants to keep all the dough anyway, takes it as a regretful necessity that he has to whack them—i.e., bump them off. (There were at least ten murders after the successful robbery.) Paulie has strict rules against drugs, because drugs turn men into informers who destroy the "family." But the family doesn't have the decency (or forethought) to support the wives and children of the men who are sent to prison, so when Henry is sent up, Karen becomes his partner, smuggling him dope that he deals inside—it's like a regular franchise. And he begins snorting cocaine. (The movie is about how swindling makes you feel alive, and that's what cocaine can keep you feeling.) By the time Henry is out of prison and is running a dealership from his Long Island home, he's a manic wreck, ready to sell out his mentor, Paulie, and every hood he knows. And he feels justified, because his closest pal, Jimmy, is ready to whack him and his wife, too.



But Scorsese doesn't weight the incidents dramatically; he leaves the themes, and even the story, lying there inert. In a hurried, not very shapely concluding sequence he ties up some threads and tells us about a few of the characters in final titles—omitting, though, a high-comic piece of information: Hill was so determinedly crooked he used the new identity given him by the Witness Protection Program to start up a new life of thievery and was thrown out of the program. But then we've learned so little about him. It's startling to read the title telling us that Henry and Karen separated after twenty-five years, because we realize we don't have any knowledge of what kept them together so long. The picture has scope rather than depth. We see Henry Hill only from the outside, and he has been made to seem slightly cut off from the mob life. He has been turned into a retread of the anxious, dutiful Harvey Keitel character in "Mean Streets," when he needs to be a rat and the moto of the movie. "GoodFellas" is like th Howard Hawks "Scarface" withou Scarface.

Paul Sorvino's Paulie come through: reluctant to move his bulk, h basks in his power quietly, and neve calls attention to himself. Thoug Lorraine Bracco's Karen doesn't ge much screen time, she has a hot, brigh vitality; she seems more sexual, mor full of go, than her husband. She's i love with him even whe she pulls a gun on hin And some of the mino players give the movie frenzied, funny texture Tony Darrow is comically desperate as a restaurant owner who's so ex hausted by the mob's harassment tha he pleads with Paulie to accept a partnership in the business. Welker Whit brings a nip of assertiveness to he scenes as a Waspy drug courier wh has to have her lucky hat to make a cok delivery. And all the mobsters an hangers-on and their women seem t belong to their settings. It's just th three major hoods, played by Liotta De Niro, and Pesci, who don't have strong enough presence.

Scorsese had a great critical succes with "Raging Bull" (1980), selecte by international polls of critics as th best film of the eighties—a picture i which he presented his central character as an icon of brutishness. This time he wants the central characters to b realistically shallow. But what flatten the movie isn't that they're shallov sociopaths; it's that these sociopaths ar conceived shallowly, the way they use to be in B pictures. (It wasn't just th low budgets that were evoked by th term "B picture"; it was also th unmemorable characters.) When Henry Hill is a child, he lives across th street from the Mafia cabstand an observes the sporty life of racketeers a they get in and out of limos; he want to make it big like them. The life h watches is like the images on movi screens that Scorsese and the rest of u watched, but we're not invited to identify with his longings.

An actor can play a shallow hoo and still be memorable if we're draw in to understand the hood's motives an emotions. (Bogart used to take us prett deeply into hoods.) But these actor seem too old for their parts, too settle

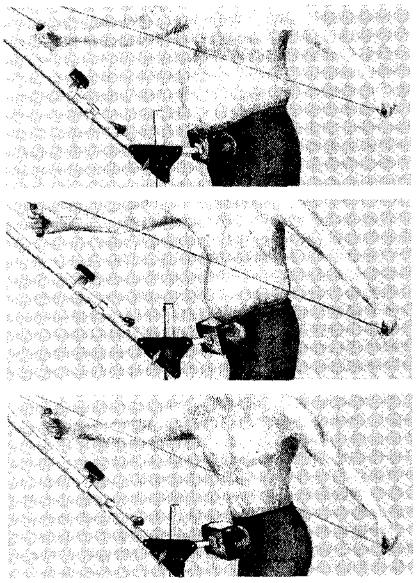
They get to us only in isolated scary
:nes: Pesci's Tommy demanding
Vhat do you mean, I'm funny?," De
ro's Jimmy wearing an unnatural
ile as he waves Karen into what
ght be a death trap.

Yet the moviemaking has such bra-
ra that you respond as if you were at
ive performance. It's Scorsese's per-
'mance. He came of age as a director
the early seventies, at a time when
.ny film enthusiasts were caught up
the sixties idea that a good movie is
vays about its director. There's a
eak of metaphoric truth in this, but
re Scorsese puts the idea right up
ınt.

The filmmaking process becomes the
ɔject of the movie. All you want to
k about is the glorious whizzing
nera, the freeze-frames and jump
:s. That may be why young film
:husiasts are so turned on by Scor-
e's work: they don't just respond to his
ns, they want to be him. When Orson
elles made "Touch of Evil," the film-
ıking process just about took over—
: movie was one flourish after anoth-

But that was 1958, and making a
·iller about your own wallowing
'e of the film medium was a thrilling
ınt. And Welles didn't drain the
aracters; rather, he made them more
:oque, to match his flourishes. He
ed the screen with stars. In 1990,
ıen a movie spans thirty years and
ns to epic length, we may miss what
; characters can do—what Nick
ɔlte's sly Lionel Dobie did for Scor-
:e's "Life Lessons," in "New York
ɔries," drawing everything together.
Scorsese the arousal junkie makes
u feel you'd like to hang out with
n and listen to him tell how he
ɔught off the effects; he's a master.
ıt this picture doesn't have the juice
d richness that come with major
rformances. It has no arc, and
esn't climax; it just comes to a stop.
ɔnceivably the abruptness could
ɔrk, but I don't think it does. Will
: lift of the moviemaking still carry
:me people aloft? Maybe, because
ıtching the movie is like getting
'ung out on pure sensation. That's
orsese's idea of a hood's life. It's also
young film enthusiast's dream of a
:ector's life, and in Scorsese's case it's
:t too far from the truth.

N the English comedy "The Tall
Guy," Jeff Goldblum is used for his
lumphing bigness—the huge fea-



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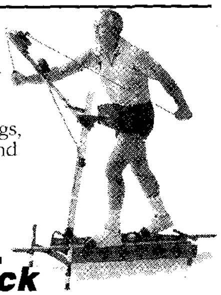

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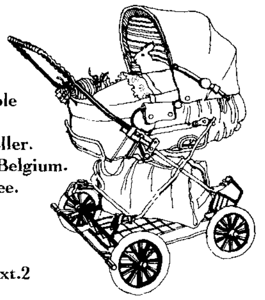

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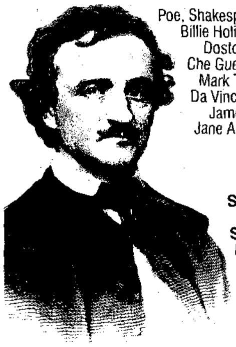

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tures, the toothy grin, the sloppy, longish hair. He's used for his good-natured outlandishness and the fear that he's about to make a fool of himself which comes over him just before he does. As an American actor in London who has spent six years playing stooge to a detestably smug English comic (Rowan Atkinson), he has lost his confidence and most of his sex drive; if it weren't for his sneezes—he has hay fever—he'd hardly know he was among the living. This gangling wreck is paired with the precise Emma Thompson as the nurse who gives him his allergy shots. She wears neat, clipped hair and crisp white uniforms. There's nothing extra about her; she's stripped down to pure flakiness. At the opening night of an Andrew Lloyd Webber-style musical, she seems to be the one person at the Drury Lane who isn't overcome by all the artistry. It's not that she's sane, exactly; she's an original—her face registers tickled disbelief. Meanwhile, Goldblum's wild eyes are rolling inside the makeup that encases him: he's the lead in a new version of "The Elephant Man"—"Elephant!" the musical.

If the SCTV troupe at its peak, in the early eighties, had made a mild (for SCTV) movie satire of the life of the theatre, it might have had something like the inventive dottiness of "The Tall Guy." This picture is the opposite of black comedy; it's friendly—one-liners spin about and skits seem to go leapfrogging. (As the stage doorman greets an actor with "Break a leg!" Goldblum, just coming in, falls on his face.) This is the first movie that Mel Smith (who's in his late thirties) has directed, but he's already a veteran stage director. He's also a comedy writer, and the plump half of Smith and Jones, the most popular comedy team in Britain. He turns up here in several bits: he's the blobby-faced fellow who looks like a pixie Alfred Hitchcock. Smith has a gift for keeping everything broad and loose, and as a director he has the kind of slapstick timing that some comics are blessed with: Goldblum's going to bed with Thompson in her tiny apartment turns into a classic destruction orgy.

Richard Curtis, whose first screenplay this is, seems a wizard at writing revue material that all fits together. Basically, the movie is a series of improvisations on autobiographical incidents: Curtis worked with Rowan Atkinson at Oxford, wrote for him for t BBC's "Not the Nine O'Clock News, and stooged for him on the stage; h also got hay-fever injections. But doubt if the picture could have been s satisfyingly silly without an America —specifically, Jeff Goldblum. There no pathos in his being banged abo when he's a stooge; he's so big yo figure he can take it. At the sam time, his dopey, childlike quality se off Rowan Atkinson's lethal geni at playing an articulate swine. (H doesn't even pretend to have heart.) The whole cast seems t be acting in clover: Emil Wol Geraldine James; Hugh Thon as, as the diphead doctor who hair sticks out like horns; Anr Massey, as Goldblum's gleaming sma agent; Kim Thomson, as a curl haired singer; the insidious Peter Ke ly, as the smarmy mountebank wh stages "Elephant!" The show's mock Webber lyrics are too tenderly plainti to quote; it would be stealing the mo ie's jokes. The screenwriter, Curti has said, in mitigation of his satiric pinpricks, "I love 'Phantom of th Opera'—I regard it as one of the nin greatest musicals ever written." I cou that as one of the thirty-two mo forthright statements I've ever read.

—PAULINE KAE

EDITORS' NOTE: Miss Kael and Te rence Rafferty will be alternating i this department.

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PLAYING METHOD

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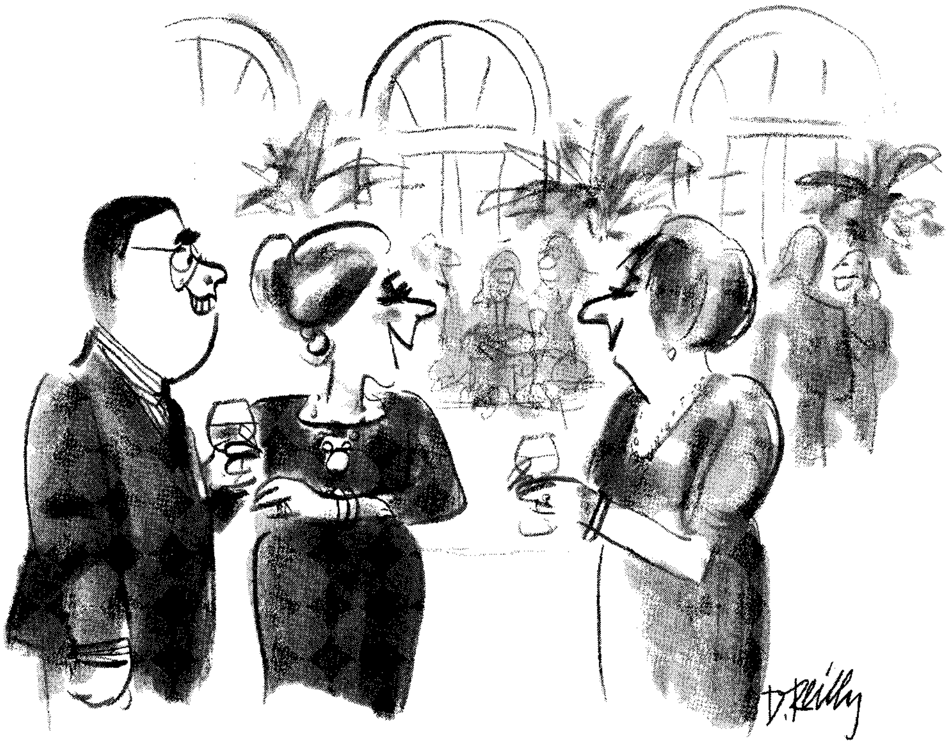
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

SEPTEMBER 13

SADDAM HUSSEIN's lunge into Kuwait has plunged the Bush Administration into its biggest gam-le, with the biggest dangers and big akes—and with the possibility of a ig payoff. Whether or not there will a war is still anybody's guess, but for ow the consensus within the Admin-tration appears to be to try to stop ort of one. The hope is that the ternational economic embargo on raq will force Hussein to withdraw om Kuwait. The harder questions volve around the issue, apparently ot finally settled within the Adminis-ation, of whether that would be ough or whether—as some in the dministration as well as some of our urrent Middle East allies argue—ussein also has to be got out of power Iraq, and Iraq's existing capacity for aging chemical warfare and its ap-roaching, if not yet realized, nuclear apability reduced or eliminated. And the embargo doesn't work, one senior dministration official says, "then we ave only one option left." As of now, dministration officials who actually now what the policy is (not many do) y that the decision to go to war if the mbargo doesn't work hasn't been ade yet, and doesn't have to be made et. One must keep in mind that deci-ons to go to war aren't likely to be vealed to a journalist. Also, such a ecision might be known to only two r three people, and perhaps only the resident knows his mind on this—if e does. And in such a hair-trigger ituation, officials acknowledge, hostil-ies could break out for various rea-ns. One reason, they say, would be a provocation" by Hussein. That leaves to our officials, in particular the resident, to decide what constitutes a rovocation. A possible provocation hat is cited would be Iraq's getting ery rough with our hostages there. One of President Bush's oft-stated our goals is to "protect American ves.") The alternative to removing ussein and/or his weapons is the oncept of a new international security tructure in the Persian Gulf region—hich has been under consideration ithin the Administration for some eeks, if in a vague form, and was aired y Secretary of State James Baker in his stimony before Congress last week—oupled with a cracking down on the flow of the most destructive matériel into Iraq. The new structure and the new crackdown, according to officials, will be required no matter what happens within Iraq in the short term.

Various Administration officials had—with reason—long viewed Saddam Hussein as a dangerous character, and this had an impact on their reaction to his invasion of Kuwait. For some time before the invasion, there had been a policy debate within the Bush Administration over how to handle Hussein, and this stemmed from a rather wacky relationship with Iraq over some years. We had "tilted" toward Iraq in the eight-year Iran-Iraq War, but then there were those missiles that we sold to Iran in an effort to get our hostages out. (It may be recalled that we learned during the Iran-Contra hearings that "the enterprise"—the self-financed scheme run by our official soldiers of fortune, Richard Secord and Albert Hakim—had as one of its notions "deposing" Saddam Hussein.) In the past decade, the United States, as well as Western European nations and the Soviet Union, helped Iraq in various ways while it developed its capability for chemical weapons—and used them (to no great outcry from us or the rest of the world)—and its nuclear possibilities, and built the fourth-largest army in the world. From 1982, when Iraq was removed from our list of nations supporting terrorism (Baker announced last week that it had just gone back on, amid reports that Iraq had been convening terrorists), we subsidized substantial Iraqi purchases of United States agricultural and other products. We backed the secular state against the one that had been taken over by Islamic fundamentalists, which also held our hostages and whose possible hold over the Gulf we feared. Now Hussein claims to be waging the holy war against the infidel, and now Iran and Iraq have restored diplomatic relations; yesterday Iran's top religious leader called upon all Muslims to wage a holy war against the United States deployment in the Gulf region. We overlooked the substantial human-rights abuses of Hussein's police state. We gave it intelligence and other help during its war with Iran. And, of course, we bought its oil.

The Bush Administration began by trying to work with Hussein, but in recent months this policy was coming under increasing criticism from both parties in Congress. In July, while Congress began to push for more sanctions against Iraq, the Bush Administration pursued what an official calls "a more blended policy," of cutting off, under pressure, some high-tech equipment to Iraq but sending "low-tech"



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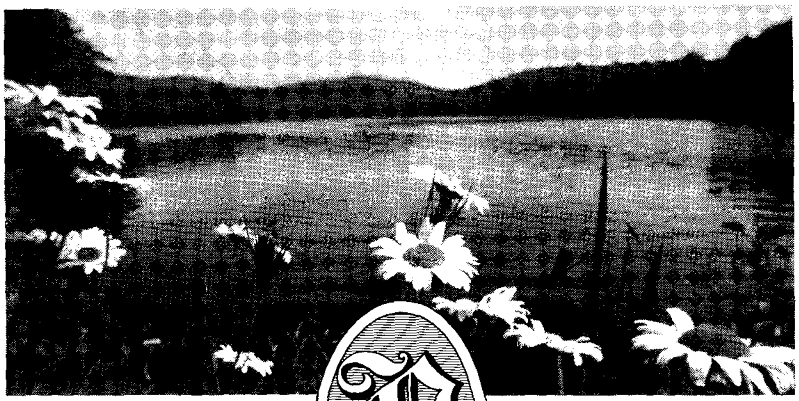
help and trying to maintain a working relationship with Hussein. In the months leading up to the invasion, some members of the Administration became increasingly disillusioned as Hussein threatened to use chemical weapons against Israel, hanged an Iranian-born British journalist who was looking into Iraq's chemical capabilities, and was caught trying to import components of triggering switches which would have helped it develop a nuclear bomb, and to import a giant artillery tube that could launch projectiles hundreds of miles—but the policy remained essentially intact. Members of Congress were also motivated by the fact that the State Department in June testified that it found "plausible" a report by Amnesty International that Iraq had tortured and killed Kurdish children in order to enforce certain policies. In late July, both houses of Congress voted to cut off agricultural subsidies, a move the Administration opposed. After an interagency dispute, the Administration in mid-July stopped the export of furnaces that could contribute to Iraq's nuclear capability (the Commerce Department is congenitally more concerned with promoting U.S. exports than with the niceties of foreign policy), and shortly after the invasion, as part of the embargo against Iraq, it finally cut off agricultural credits. But up until the invasion the Administration continued to try to keep the relationship with Hussein going, in the hope that he could be contained through contact. Yet at some level various policymakers here, even those who were trying to keep an accommodation going, had understood for some time that one day, perhaps not too far off, Iraq might present us, and the rest of the world, with the Third World nuclear nightmare that we have known for some time would be coming from somewhere, and that it might use its chemical capability against others besides Iranians and Kurds.

WHEN Iraqi troops massed on the Kuwaiti border in late July, the consensus within the Administration was that this was meant as heavy-handed intimidation, and that if Hussein used the troops it would be only for the purpose of acquiring territory the two sides had been arguing over for a long time: two small islands that would give Iraq access to the Gulf, and the strip of land that lies across th Iraq-Kuwait border and contains large oil field. Iraq, a state carved ou by the British following the Firs World War, when the remains of th Ottoman Empire were divided up—such exercises often cause future problems—had been given no access to th Gulf. Throughout history, a nation desire for access to the sea has been powerful motivation. Iraq had mad threatening moves against Kuwait before. Moreover, Iraq was angry wit Kuwait for overproducing oil (thu lowering its price) and for refusing t forgive loans Kuwait made to Ira during the Iran-Iraq War. In Jul negotiations were going on betwee Iraq and Kuwait over territory, o policy, and the loans. The negotiation blew up on August 1st, when Ira complained that Kuwait wasn't seriously negotiating. Kuwaiti official have since disputed this, and there wa a consensus in the Arab world that Ira wasn't seriously negotiating. Administration officials say it didn't becom clear to them that Iraq would invad until a few hours before it did, o August 2nd, though there had bee strong indications that it would. senior Administration official say "Very few people, in or out of government, said the Iraqis would invad occupy, and annex Kuwait." But ther had been considerable speculation inside and outside the government th Iraq would invade Kuwait, and th C.I.A. started warning in late July th Iraq might attack. It issued a ne warning on August 1st. None of thi set off any great flurry of activity i Washington, or public—or even private—warnings to Saddam Hussein b the President. The hope still was th he could be worked with.

Administration officials are understandably defensive about what the knew and what they did just before Ira attacked Kuwait, because there is growing body of evidence that by thei actions, or inaction, in the weeks leading up to the attack they may have le Saddam Hussein to believe that he ha a green light. Not only hadn't w objected to Hussein's earlier atrocitie but over the summer we were qui while he made threats as well a threatening moves against Kuwai Washington didn't take them seriously, and in late July the State Department issued a statement saying th "we do not have any defense treatie

ith Kuwait and there are no special
·fense or security commitments to
uwait"—a statement that, while
ue, failed to signal that we would be
ıhappy about an attack. On July 31st,
hen John Kelly, Assistant Secretary
State for Near Eastern and South
sian Affairs, was asked by House
oreign Affairs Committee Chairman
ee Hamilton, of Indiana, what we
ould do if Iraq attacked Kuwait, he
id the question was "hypothetical,"
ıd affirmed that we had no treaty
ımmitment to send our forces in that
se. As first revealed by ABC earlier
is week, April Glaspie, our Ambas-
dor in Baghdad at the time (she is
ɔw in Washington), in a meeting
ith Saddam Hussein on July 25th,
iled to probe or hear the real nature
his threats, and also told him, "I
lmire your extraordinary efforts to
build your country," and assured him
at President Bush wants "better and
·eper relations with Iraq." According
a transcript of the conversation,
leased by the Iraqis yesterday—with
e apparent intent of showing that
aq had reason to believe the United
ates wouldn't respond to an attack—
e Ambassador didn't criticize the
aqi troop buildup on the Kuwait bor-
·r. The transcript, parts of which
ɔpeared in today's Washington *Post*,
so chillingly shows Hussein saying to
laspie, "Yours is a society which
ınnot accept ten thousand dead in one
ıttle." At one point, Glaspie told
ussein, "We have no opinion on the
rab-Arab conflicts, like your border
sagreement with Kuwait," a state-
ent she told him she was making on
e instructions of James Baker—but
hich officials now say only pertained
the specifics of the border dispute,
ɔt to whether we would oppose an
tack. At the time, it was the consen-
ıs here and in the rest of the Arab
orld that Hussein was bluffing.
laspie is being made a scapegoat by
her Administration officials, who say
ıe should have understood the threats
-which were actually ambiguous—
ıt other officials were also ignoring
arnings, and in her comments Glas-
e was reflecting the Bush Admin-
tration's policy. Once Saddam Hus-
in marched, there was little the Ad-
inistration could do immediately to
op him.

A very important factor in what
ıppened next was that Hussein had
ed to President Hosni Mubarak of



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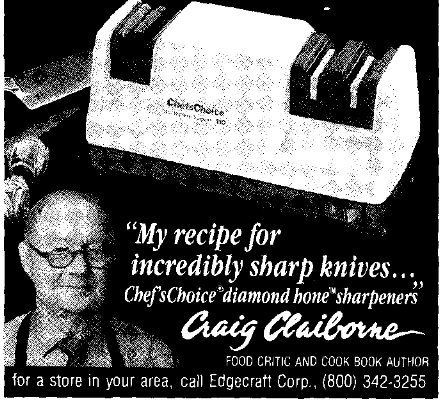

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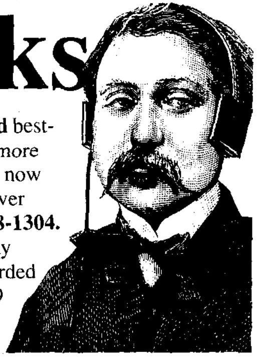

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Egypt and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia as well as (officials thought at the time) our Ambassador in Baghdad, telling them that he didn't intend to invade. The other Arab leaders were surprised and angered (they thought Hussein had such a strong hand that he wouldn't have to invade)—as was President Bush. Hussein has since insisted that he had said he wouldn't attack unless the negotiations failed. Hussein's next mistake was not stopping at Kuwait City but sending his troops all the way to the Saudi border, thus not only electrifying other nations in the Middle East but arousing the most serious concerns of policymakers here. The fate of the members of Kuwait's ruling family, whom Hussein's troops tried to capture, and who are now sitting in exile in a hotel in Saudi Arabia, had a profound effect on other Middle Eastern ruling families. Also, Iraq's recent behavior had become increasingly alarming to Egypt and Syria, who have no interest in seeing Iraq become too strong, and it had contributed to a recent warming between these long-hostile countries.

Once Hussein marched, the options, as viewed by the President and his top policy advisers, were to protest but do nothing; to make a serious effort to force Iraq out of Kuwait; to make it clear that if Iraqi troops went into Saudi Arabia we would do something about it; to send a token force (with emphasis on air power); to send the large force that we did. According to senior officials, there was a consensus among the President's advisers that the option of protesting but doing nothing was "a non-starter." At the first meeting of the President and the National Security Council after the invasion, the thinking that prevailed, with little dissent, was that this was the first test of our ability to maintain global or regional stability in the post-Cold War era; that the end of the Cold War gave, or might have appeared to give, Hussein and others more, rather than less, flexibility, because at this stage the United States and the Soviet Union might be less concerned about a regional conflict turning into a conflict between the two superpowers, and because the Soviet Union is consumed with internal problems, and the United States was unlikely to react; that as a matter of precedent as well as of principle we couldn't stand by and let Kuwai be knocked out of existence, whether o not it had had a democratic government. Another point made then, an one that policymakers repeat explicitl and unapologetically, was that this is a least in part about oil: that the combined resources of Iraq and Kuwai would give Hussein twenty per cent o the world's oil, allowing him all th more profits to spend on weapons, an that, if left alone, he would be in position to intimidate all the oil-producing states of the Persian Gul and dominate the world oil market This is a more complicated point tha that the whole exercise is about "chea oil"; the world disruption (some o which we have already begun to see that could come from displacement o oil supplies from the Middle Eas would be very damaging, if not disastrous, to a great many countries. Iraq control of the bulk of the world's oi could, the President's policymakers believed, cause serious turmoil in th United States. A senior Administratio official says, "None of this excuses ou not having an energy policy for the las twenty years, but that's where we are.'

A final argument that was persuasiv to the policymakers—but one that, fo obvious reasons, they don't talk abou much publicly—was that if Hussei succeeded in his recent actions his ultimate target would be Israel, in whic event we couldn't stand by. Since officials don't want to give Hussein an excuses for saying that the Unite States' reaction to him is part of a Zionist plot, they have leaned on Israel leaders to keep quiet, as th Israelis have largely done. Th fact that the attack had bee made by a man many official were already disturbed abou wasn't much articulated, I'm told, but it was in everyone' mind that this is a man wit chemical weapons (and now ballisti missiles to project them further), an who might shortly have nuclear weapons. For all the talk about the need t "deter aggression," a key policymake concedes that if a country less important than Kuwait had been invaded, o if the principal product of Kuwait an Saudi Arabia were artichokes instead o oil, we would not have proceeded as w did. So, while Bush talks of this being the first instance of our trying to establish a "new world order" (an unfortunate term, since Hitler used the term

ıew order"), of taking coöperative ·tion to deter aggression, the thought larger than the reality.

The decision to invoke an embargo ı goods to and from Iraq was taken ırly. Once the decision to respond ilitarily was made, there remained .e questions of what the military goal as and what size force to deploy. At ıe time, according to the policymaks, there was no great debate over hat the military goal should be, beıuse the options were limited. Milirily rolling back Iraq, a key policyaker says, "wasn't an option at the me." The key question at the me was whether to go in small · go in big—of a size we have ever deployed before in the Iiddle East, the largest since ietnam—and, given the sensivities and physical difficulties of the gion, and the costs and risks inolved, this was not an easy decision. olin Powell, the chairman of the Joint hiefs of Staff, has called Operation esert Shield "the largest, most comex, rapid deployment of U.S. forces nce World War II." The Saudis' greeing to let us base forces in their ountry was unprecedented, and Mide East experts predict substantial cullral strains from having so many mericans stationed in conservative Iuslim Saudi Arabia, site of Islam's oliest places. Powell is reported to ave argued that if we were going to o in we should go in big enough to ght a serious military battle with Iraq that became necessary. We are also oing in in a way that will give us rious military options. Powell's was political as well as a logistical arguent. Having been an officer in Vietam and served as national security dviser, Powell thinks politically as ell as militarily, and knows that it can difficult to get the public to support a uildup of military troops over time; e President might well have no reater public support than he had at e beginning of this crisis. Moreover, owell, as we saw in Panama, thinks g; a military commander wants to ive his forces all the chances and otection he can. Even the task of eterring an Iraqi attack on Saudi Araa, officials say, requires substantial rces. An official said to me last week, There are now over two hundred ousand Iraqi troops in southern Iraq d Kuwait, and you don't want to give p oil fields to deter them; you need defense in depth—you don't want to take on any more casualties than you have to." Powell says that his mission is to deter an Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia and, if necessary, to defend against one. However, he adds, "as a military commander I'm never not looking at options."

In fact, in the first couple of weeks of our deployment the military was far more worried than it let on about its ability to withstand an Iraqi attack. It wasn't until August 27th, when M-1 tanks began to arrive by ship, that our military leaders began to breathe more easily. Soon, enough military equipment will have arrived to give the military not only what it deems necessary to deter or fight off any Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia but also what it needs to take offensive action. As of now, we have about a hundred and fifty thousand troops in the area, and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney said late last week that it's "too soon" to stop the flow of troops and weapons. Officials dismissed Henry Kissinger's public suggestion in mid-August that the U.S. should consider a "surgical" strike to remove Iraq's most dangerous weapons if "sanctions are too uncertain and diplomacy unavailing." One senior Administration official says, "There is no such thing as a surgical strike." A military official says, "We wouldn't know where to find Saddam Hussein." Apparently, when Hussein isn't giving television interviews it's not clear where he is. Officials are probably chastened by recent experience: though we tried, we couldn't hit Muammar Qaddafi with a bomb (we did hit his tent), and it took us four days to find Manuel Noriega, who was presumably under our noses. (Actually, we didn't find him—he surfaced.)

The length of time it has taken to get the requisite force in place has raised new questions about what we spent more than two trillion dollars on over the last decade. In fact, for all the talk about the necessity for having a "rapid deployment force," to fight wars in the Third World, we essentially spent our money on preparations to fight the Soviet Union. There is now some blame being exchanged over this between Congress and the Pentagon, but neither gave high priority to preparing for this kind of eventuality. The military has in fact long wanted bases in the region and the ability to project

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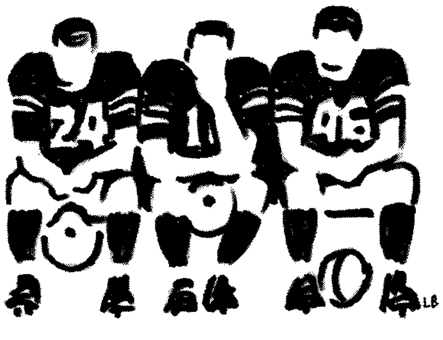
power into it more quickly, and after this exercise long-term arrangements may be made in line with these wishes—now demonstrated needs, if we are to be involved in the region.

Though the President's emphasis may have changed in the many statements he has made, he has been consistent, if not exactly clear, in the four goals he has set forth: the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait; the restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait; stability in the Persian Gulf region; and protection of the lives of American citizens abroad. In his speech before Congress on Tuesday night, he added the establishment of a new world order. Though some outside the Administration have questioned whether we should sacrifice in order to restore to the throne the Emir of Kuwait—the head of one of several ruling houses the British set up in the region—Administration officials say that Saddam Hussein must receive, and appear to receive, no reward for his aggression. Privately, they say that if the Kuwaitis want to change their form of government (which had actually been a bit more liberalized than others in the region) after the Emir has been restored, that's up to them. There may ultimately be some negotiability on this point, but for the time being the Administration is being very tough about insisting that the terms of Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait are not negotiable. Among other things, it wants to keep the Arab states that have sided with us from knuckling under to pressures to give Hussein an out, or some reward for his aggression. Also, the other ruling houses in the region would be most perturbed if we sold out the Emir. Baker seemed to suggest an opening in his testimony before Congress last week when he said that negotiations on the future of Kuwait's government and Iraq's territorial claims could take place after Iraq withdrew, adding that such discussions were "contemplated by one of the U.N. resolutions." The Administration didn't expect anything to come of the recent negotiating mission undertaken by United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, both because its position is that there is nothing to negotiate and because it believes that Hussein has not yet accepted the idea that he must yield. How long some of the other colonially invented regimes in the area might last, and what turmoil might ensue if they don't—and what the world's oil supply would look like then—is anyone's guess.

Administration officials are not unaware of the lack of democracy in the region—but that's not their immediate concern—or of the dangers that lie in the extraordinary gap between the wealth of the ruling class and the state of the common workers. In his testimony last week Baker said, rather breezily, "I don't see why we shouldn't support democracy in the Middle East every much as in Central Europe." (There are plenty of problems now in Central Europe, but the subject is no longer in fashion.) In fact, part of Baker's brief on his mission to the Middle East last week to ask for more financial support for the effort to stop Iraq (Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady hit up some European countries and Japan and South Korea) was that he would urge the wealthy Arab nations to create some regional institutions to raise the standard of living of poorer Arabs. Baker raised a substantial amount of money from the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, and the United Arab Emirates; according to testimony by Cheney on Tuesday, Baker and Brady raised enough to pay half the currently estimated—the estimate keeps rising—fifteen billion dollars annually. (The word out of the Baker camp last weekend was that Baker had raised enough to pay for the entire operation.) In order to keep the embargo from developing big gaps, the United States also solicited money for countries that have been especially damaged by it—in particular, Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan. It was because Egypt is in such economic trouble, and has contributed forces to the exercise (as have Saudi Arabia and Syria), that the Administration moved last week to forgive a seven-billion-dollar military loan. Enforcing the embargo, an official says, is like chess—the Administration tries to block Saddam Hussein every place it can. Our law-enforcement and intelligence agencies are monitoring countrie companies, and individuals, and if potential break in the embargo is espie abroad our Ambassador pays a call th next day.



THE President's quick organization of an international respons and of the embargo on goods to an from Iraq, and his success in winnin United Nations Security Council approval of our actions were the benefi of his having cultivated other worl leaders, and reflected an understandin that for all manner of reasons there ha to be a multilateral response. (Chest Republicans used to scoff at "multilateralism.") The Administration's decision to use force to stop ships wit goods for Iraq before such action wa approved by the United Nations di cause some tensions with some of ou European allies, who thought we wer overreacting (and who, with the exception of Great Britain, still haven't contributed much to the effort). Of cours much of Washington was away whil all this was going on, and members c Congress aren't inclined to argue wit success. As they trickled back to tow in the past week, or appeared on television programs in August, some raise questions about details—it's not a ba idea to hedge a little—but as yet fe have raised objections to the President basic approach. Some have objecte strenuously to the fact that our NAT allies haven't been contributing more but that's not the same thing, as th lawmakers know, as directly criticizin the President.

Bush is, at the moment, on a roll. H looks good, seems in command, and i dealing with the kinds of matters tha the nation looks to Presidents to dea with. For the time being, at least, th domestic issues that were causing hi problems in July—the S. & L. scandal his opposition to certain popular programs, such as family leave, that Congress was approving; the dissent withi the Republican Party over his abandonment of his "no new taxes" pledge— have been all but forgotten. (Unti hearings began this week, so was hi politically deft nomination of the mysterious David Souter to the Suprem Court.) The economy had been ver slow before August, with some areas i a recession, and the recent increases i oil prices are causing more problems We are now paying for a decade o running up an enormous debt and hav g no energy policy. According to the lls, Bush is enjoying strong popular pport for his actions in the Gulf thus r. (His handling of the economy esn't do as well.) During August, e President stubbornly (Bush is very ubborn) resisted the suggestions of iends and some staff members—his aff doesn't argue with him much—at he was, under the circumstances, ating and golfing too much, and rhaps because of that he came back re briefly during the last week of ugust for a showy, partly televised iefing of members of Congress who d flown in from all over the place. Many didn't bother.)

Baker's absence, on vacation at his nch in Wyoming, was (and remains) e subject of much speculation. Baker, ong with his top aides, had been eping up a gruelling travel schedule, d did need a rest. (They're back at it: llowing the Helsinki summit last nday, which followed Baker's swing rough the Middle East, Baker and s entourage went to Brussels and then Moscow, where yesterday the four ctorious allies signed a treaty giving their rights over Germany, clearing e way for reunification; because of tion taken by Germany to speed up unification it is now scheduled to take ace October 3rd. These days, this omentous development seems like a otnote. Today, Baker went on to ria, with which we have long had ol relations. Syria is one of six na- ons still on our terrorist list, and is lieved to have played a role in the mbing of Pan Am 103, in 1988.) aker did postpone the start of his ugust vacation to fly to Turkey and ccessfully persuade it to cut off the peline that brings in oil from Iraq, d to Brussels to consult with NATO lies. (He had already been in Moscow obtain a joint United States–Soviet atement denouncing the invasion.) argaret Tutwiler, his spokesperson d close adviser, insists he was in nstant communication with Bush as ell as in touch with other world gures. But none of this stopped the eculation here, which runs as fol- ws: Baker is keenly conscious of sym- ls, and highly sensitized to what he ants to be associated with in the blic mind. He is a past-master at tting himself apart from certain ents, sometimes even when he is pub- cly defending them (a chore he some- mes avoids): the choice of Dan Quayle as Vice-President, the failed coup in Panama, the invasion of Panama, and the President's secretly sending high emissaries to Beijing. Some close observers of Baker think that he saw the first cycle of the Iraq crisis as essentially a military exercise, and Cheney's show (some see a rivalry there), and not something he should spend a lot of time hanging around. Moreover, Baker has long seen the Middle East as a maw that has chewed up the time and reputations of several Secretaries of State. However, in late August, just as the questions about where he was began to swell, Baker—whose antennae are exquisitely tuned, thanks in part to Tutwiler and other close associates—came back to town and planted himself at the President's side, and then, in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, publicly launched the plan for a long-term stabilization of the Persian Gulf region. Even longtime Baker watchers were awestruck.

Baker went further in his testimony on the idea of a long-term regional security structure than the thinking in the Administration has. A number of people in the Administration—at the Pentagon, in the State Department, and on the staff of the National Security Council—have been talking about such an idea. Richard Haass, the N.S.C.'s senior director of Near East and South Asian Affairs, and Dennis Ross, the director of policy planning for the State Department and Baker's top adviser on the Middle East, are close friends and talk frequently. (Haass, who is thirty-nine, wrote his doctoral thesis on U.S. policy toward the Persian Gulf.) At this point, the policymakers are clearer about the need for some long-term stabilizing force in the Middle East than they are about what mix of forces there should be, who would be in them, and what sorts of guarantees such a policy would carry. At the moment, a senior Administration official says, it's "premature" to "try to define such a structure," because "we don't know what the situation is going to look like when the current crisis is over." The idea is that we have set up regional structures to maintain security in Europe and Asia, and should be able to do so in the Gulf region, but the analogy can be carried only so far, since the large-scale basing

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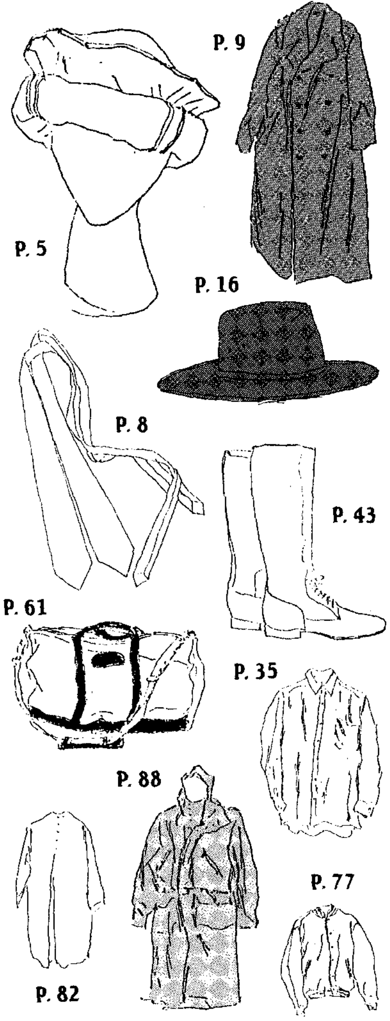

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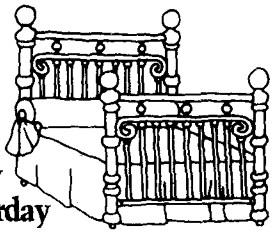

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of United States ground troops in the region indefinitely is probably not in the cards, for a variety of reasons. It was one thing for the Saudis to invite us in when the kingdom seemed in peril, but it would be another to let us stay indefinitely. U.S. ground troops could well be part of the structure, policymakers say, but they add that at the moment it's not clear where they would be based, or what mix of U.S. forces might remain in the region. Also, the policymakers don't envision anything as formal as NATO. The Arabs remain very sensitive to anything that smacks of the old colonial rule—a sentiment Saddam Hussein is now trying to play upon. Baker, having used the NATO analogy in his first day's testimony, pulled back a bit in his testimony the next day. (On the first day, he did say that perhaps the presence might be a naval one, not a ground one.) On his trip to the Middle East, he reassured the Saudis that the United States wasn't seeking a long-term ground presence in the Gulf region, but the United States has long sought more of a military presence there, particularly in Saudi Arabia, so as to be able to introduce troops quickly, and a senior official says that the current crisis shows the difficulties of having had weak allies, loose arrangements, and no forces in the region. When Baker gave his testimony, there was also reason to wonder how the Soviets, who had been quite coöperative thus far, would take to the idea of a major U.S. presence in the Gulf region over the long term—the Administration apparently hadn't checked—and last Sunday, at the joint press conference after the meeting between Bush and Gorbachev in Helsinki, Bush said our forces wouldn't stay "a day longer than is required," which was elusive. Gorbachev said the President had told him that he would do everything possible to see that U.S. forces would be withdrawn from the region, and Gorbachev added, "That's a very important statement."

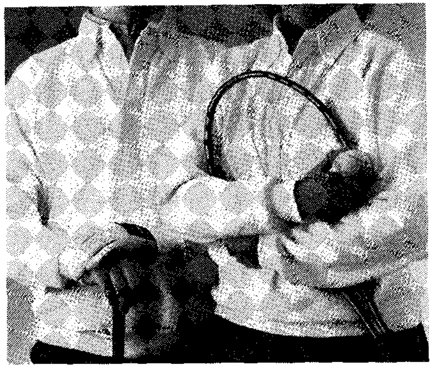
Baker's testimony was taken by many here—accurately or not—to be a response to the argument that the only way to remove Saddam Hussein and Iraq as a military menace is through military action, and in fact officials do suggest that some kind of long-term security structure, coupled with very tough action against those who supply Iraq with the wherewithal to remain a menace to the Middle East, could be an effective restraint on Hussein and Iraq. They acknowledge that in today's world keeping the matériel out would be difficult. One senior military official says, "It's a matter of drying up his supplies." According to this official, even now Iraq needs lubricants for its jet engines, and the help of foreign technicians (which is why the U.S. wants the Soviets to withdraw their military technicians from Iraq). In Helsinki, Gorbachev indicated that the advisers were being reduced but not withdrawn. One reason there's some optimism within the Administration about the effectiveness of the embargo is that Iraq is particularly dependent on exports and imports. A senior Administration official says, "Iraq can never again be allowed to have the wherewithal to become as powerful as it is now. We need a different kind of Iraq—one that is less violently led and less of a threat to its neighbors. We hope to achieve that non-invasively."

Whatever the Bush Administration's ultimate intentions, at the moment its officials are in the awkward position of trying to convince the public that it doesn't want to go to war while at the same time trying to let Saddam Hussein know that it might, and that if it does he will lose. Top officials say that the two great drawbacks to going to war are that it could still leave the world with a strong, nationalistic Iraq, thus leaving the long-term problem unsolved, and, of course, that there is no way it wouldn't be very nasty. They say that, no matter how strong the million-man Iraqi Army may be (a question on which there is uncertainty), it is nothing to take on lightly, and any military action could have unforeseen consequences in lives lost, other casualties, and damage to the oil fields in the region; could cause unknowable ripple effects in the Arab world; and could break up the anti-Hussein alliance so painstakingly built. However, to varying degrees the Saudis and Egyptians have urged us to get rid of Hussein. Though there are differences of opinion within the Administration on the advisability of military action, there is said to be no great policy debate going on right now on the subject, because, officials say, the blockad strategy has to be given a chance t work. Of course, officials will not sa when they think a decision to tak military action must be considered (if has not already been made), and the cite the dangers in taking what th world sees as unprovoked action. Various types of action have been openl discussed by some Pentagon officials ranging from an attack on Iraq's ke facilities to a ground war to get Ira out of Kuwait. Taking out the chemical facilities wouldn't be easy, becaus they are dispersed (and, it is believed have hostages placed around them) and that would still leave chemica materials already manufactured an ready for use. Chemical and nuclea facilities could be rebuilt. Bush has sai that the fact that Americans are bein held hostage won't determine our poli cy toward Iraq, but a decision to tak action that might kill American civilians wouldn't be easy. This gets bac to the long-term regional-containmen plan.

What's more, Administration officials indicate that they don't believ that the Administration has the domestic or international support—at least a yet—for an attack. The thinking goes that the United States has to appear t have given diplomacy a chance, an tried to make the embargo work, befor it could begin to justify military action The Administration is attempting t convince Hussein that time isn't on his side; officials believe that Hussei thinks time is on his side—that he ca weaken the embargo, and the unity o his adversaries. The official, public policy premise here is that a successfu embargo could get Saddam Hussein t withdraw from Kuwait, but there ar some internal doubts about this, because it could mean the end of his career. But it's not ruled out, nor is th end of his career (which is also bein sought covertly) ruled out if he i forced to withdraw from Kuwait. (H has already given up the territory h won from Iran.) Bush and Baker giv evasive replies when they're asked if w might take military action, or whethe the removal of Saddam Hussein is on of our objectives. Last week, Baker sai that that's not one of our "stated objectives," but he made it clear the Administration would be happy to see it happen. While saying that he won't ge into "hypotheticals," Bush has als taken care to convey that he consider s options open. His stated goal of tability in the Persian Gulf region" ambiguous enough to invite various terpretations. In any event, it can't ruled out that there will be military tion. An Administration official says, This is a commitment without a clear ea of how it ends."

THOUGH ahead of time the Administration gave a number of asons publicly for the President's dden one-day meeting with Gorchev on Sunday, and said the purpose asn't just to deal with the Middle ast, that was the overriding purpose, ith the corollary goal of giving orbachev a boost. Gorbachev appears be in deepening trouble at home as e economy worsens and the republics creasingly go their own way. The eory, which may be debatable, is that owing Gorbachev to be a major orld figure—despite everything, still e leader of a superpower—helps him home. Gorbachev had been very operative, if not completely so, in the ersian Gulf—after all, Iraq had been e of the Soviet Union's principal ients—so Bush wanted to reinforce im; to send the message to Saddam ussein that the two nations are united gainst him, as well as send a message unity to other Arab nations; and to ise a few ancillary issues, such as the early two hundred Soviet military adsers in Iraq. (There are at least five ousand other Soviet citizens in Iraq.) the old days, which weren't very ng ago, such Soviet support in the nited Nations never would have hapened, nor would the Soviet Union ave been as calm about the deployment a large U.S. military force in the ulf region. Still, the Soviet Union has s own interests in the Middle East, d the differences between Bush and orbachev were shown to the world uring their joint press conference.

United States officials, starting with ush, expressed great pleasure with the int statement, which strongly called pon Hussein to withdraw from Iraq, nd said that "if the current steps fail end" the aggression "we are prepared to consider additional ones constent with the U.N. Charter." hough those additional steps weren't laborated upon in the statement, U.S. fficials said later that they could inlude further sanctions against Iraq nd a tightening of the blockade by opping air traffic into Iraq and, ultimately, the use of force. In the press conference, while Bush, after asserting, as he always does, that he won't get into hypotheticals, left open the possibility of military action, Gorbachev said firmly that the joint statement did not mean that he himself would approve military action if Iraq didn't withdraw. Bush remarked, "We may have a difference on that." Officials said later that the difference may only be a matter of time, and that the fact that Gorbachev didn't flatly rule out the use of force was significant. Still, one point of the official talk about military action, and of the hints that it may be coming, is to worry Hussein into withdrawing from Kuwait, so this apparent difference may not have been helpful. Gorbachev made it quite clear that he supports the embargo and that Saddam Hussein has to get out of Kuwait, and had better not start any other trouble. But the display of unity, unprecedented since the Cold War began—we have become so accustomed to seeing Bush and Gorbachev together that we can overlook the significance of this moment—was also undermined somewhat by other differences. Administration officials conceded afterward that they were disappointed by Gorbachev's refusal to withdraw all of the military advisers. As some U.S. policymakers expected, Gorbachev declined to send forces to the region—he has enough problems, and there is what one official describes as "an isolationist fever" in the Soviet Union. It appears that one result of the collaboration between Bush and Gorbachev was to give the Soviets a role in the Middle East—it had long been U.S. policy to keep the Soviets out—though Gorbachev and Bush differed over whether the Iraqi crisis should be linked to the settlement of the issues of Israeli borders and Palestinian rights. (Gorbachev said it should.) In their meeting, Bush indicated to Gorbachev that the Soviets may well have a role in other matters once the Gulf crisis is resolved. An Administration official says, "The Soviets have shown they can play a constructive role in the Middle East. The President indicated an openness in principle to their playing more of a role there. But the focus now is on the situation in the Gulf. There's no linkage, it's sequential. One crisis at a time." There appeared to be some difference in emphasis on the part of the two men over sending food to Iraq "for



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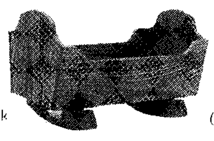

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humanitarian purposes." The joint statement said that such food should be sent but that "any such imports must be strictly monitored" by international agencies, and "special priority" be given to children. Bush emphasized that this shouldn't be "interpreted as a wholesale big hole in this embargo." Inevitably, the issue of food has started to cause the United States some discomfort. When the blockade was begun, the intention was that food would be embargoed, and the United Nations resolution says that all goods should be barred except for "supplies intended strictly for medical purposes, and, in humanitarian circumstances, foodstuffs." Last week, Hussein said that the food embargo was starving Iraqi babies—a statement for which U.S. officials said there was no confirmation—and U.S. policymakers are concerned that he can exploit this issue. Already, some other countries—including India, China, and Iran—have said that they want to send food to Iraq. In the press conference, there was an indication that Bush had pledged some economic aid to the Soviet Union, but no details.

THE President had been urged by congressional leaders to make a prime-time speech explaining his Persian Gulf policy more clearly to the nation, but in his speech before a joint session of Congress Tuesday night he didn't go much further than he had before. In adding his hope for a "new world order" as his fifth goal, he set forth a vision of a world in lofty terms: "An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony." But he didn't square this with his explanation of the exceptional nature of the Iraqi crisis in that it involves potential domination of world oil supplies and prices "by one so ruthless." He didn't suggest, because he can't at the moment, that much of the world may not go to all this trouble in the case of an attack on any old country, or even very many others.

Bush was strong and effective in his delivery when he spoke of his determination to drive Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, and did say that "sanctions will take time to have their full intended effect." He went on, signalling that something else may be in store, "We will continue to review all options with our allies, but let it be clear: We will not let this aggression stand." He se forth the idea that we will have a long term role in the Gulf region, withou spelling out exactly what that will be And in a statement in which he clearl wanted people to note his firmness h said, "Iraq will not be permitted t annex Kuwait. And that's not a threa It's not a boast. That's just the way it' going to be."

Bush made a halfhearted appeal fo energy conservation and passage of certain energy legislation, and deplore the fact that we have become mor dependent on imported oil—as if h had been on another planet during th last nine and a half years and not Vice President and in charge of regulator policy, and then President. (Unde Bush's guidance, a fair amount of undoing of conservation rules went o during the Reagan Administration. And Bush has yet to submit a comprehensive energy policy. He didn't mention that the current crisis might ca for sacrifice; it's not in Bush's politica nature to give the American people ba news. He has been leading well in thi crisis thus far, but Winston Churchi he isn't.

And Bush undermined much of th stature of the early part of his speech devoted to the Gulf crisis, by shiftin levels and making a petty partisan appeal for a budget agreement on hi terms. The tone was all wrong both fo what had gone before, and for th existing situation. He spoke as if it wer two months ago, and not at the poin where Democrats and Republicans, sequestered at Andrews Air Force Base just outside Washington, were struggling to come up with a budget deal. I wasn't the time for him to go into th details of his own budget position (h cited no unpleasant measures), or to ge cute, as he did. At the time Bush spoke it appeared that progress was bein made in the talks, and a breakthroug was deemed close, but at this momen the negotiators are still struggling a Andrews. (Actually, the negotiator had hoped to finish by last Sunda night, and make a deal with the President on Monday, before the President' speech.) There were ways to call fo action on the deficit that would hav been more in keeping with the moment and with the statesman's role he wa playing in the first part of his speech and with the bipartisan support h needs now on both international an domestic affairs. —ELIZABETH DREV

BOOKS

The Indiana Whatevers

SEWARD PARK is a huge, dilapidated high school on New York's Lower East Side which has been arged with educating the children of ever-changing population of poor migrants for nearly sixty years. The ighborhood served by the school has ver been anything but shabby, but in last decades the shabbiness has ned lethal, because the school is uated in one of the city's most drug- lden districts—an area the New rk City police have dubbed "the g retail capital of America."

In his admirable "Small Victories: ne Real World of a Teacher, Her udents and Their High School" arper & Row; $22.95), Samuel G. eedman, a former reporter for the *mes*, depicts Seward as a kind of npest-tossed lifeboat providing stu- nts a fleeting chance to move on to llege, productive jobs, decent in- mes, and a foothold in the culture. nfortunately, an alarming proportion the students are so trammelled by verty, dislocation, or drugs that they unable to accept what the school has offer. When Dr. Noel Kriftcher, the hool's principal, addressed an assem- ge of Seward's three hundred teach- at the beginning of the academic ar 1987-88—the year during which eedman observed the hool—he included in welcoming speech a eak statistical over- ew of some of Seward rk's problems: a arter of the nearly urteen hundred in- ming freshmen, he ported, were as old as venteen, which prob- ly meant that they d been held back sev- al times or were re- nt immigrants; near- twenty per cent of em had been absent ore than eight weeks eighth graders, and lf of them were con- lered likely to drop t of high school; ap- oximately a hundred d fifty-five needed ei- er bilingual education or courses in English as a second language; and six hundred more freshmen were expected to enter during the academic year, bringing the school toward a hundred and fifty per cent of capacity.

Freedman points out that such figures were not unfamiliar to the teachers. "Among Seward Park's continuing students," he writes, "nearly nine in ten live with parents who do not speak English. Half come from single-parent families and 65 percent from families who are eligible for public assistance. About 30 students inhabit welfare hotels or homeless shelters and as many as 150 have been deserted or evicted by their parents and left to raise themselves: virtually all attended elementary and junior high schools that are among the poorest in the city. When the current seniors entered Seward Park, only 13.8 percent were reading at grade level. . . . Last year's seniors scored a mean of 288, on a scale of 200 to 800 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, placing Seward Park in the lowest 20 percent nationally." Given problems like these, it is hardly surprising that in 1985 a task force evaluating New York State's public schools ranked Seward Park among the worst ten per cent. What is surprising, in view of the background of hopelessness, is that Jessica Siegel—the inspired teacher who is the book's central figure—and an impressive number of her colleagues can help their students to surmount the obstacles. Of the Seward Park students who make it to graduation, most go on to college or to trade schools and receive more than a hundred thousand dollars in scholarships. Compared with some other city schools, Seward Park is considered fairly safe, and its staff has the reputation of being unusually dedicated. "Do you say, 'I could win the N.B.A. if I coached the L.A. Lakers, but I coach the Indiana Whatevers'?" Kriftcher rhetorically asks his staff. "The question is, what can you accomplish with the Indiana Whatevers?"

Jessica Siegel is a former reporter for the Liberation News Service—a collectively run radical press agency of the nineteen-sixties and seventies—who, while filling in as a secretary in 1976 at Covenant House, learned that she liked to work with young people. She began her teaching career in 1978, as a paraprofessional at Seward, and was later hired to teach English and journalism and to act as the faculty adviser for the school paper. She has proved to be an indomitable workhorse: she reads

"I was afraid of this—a Chinese menu just came in on our fax."

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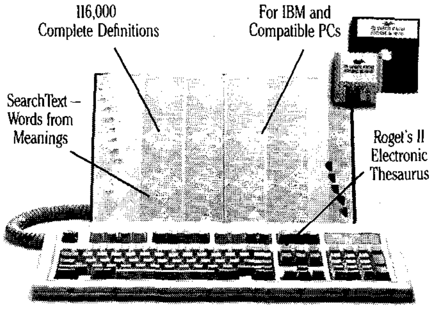

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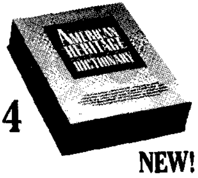

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papers till she drops, pushes hard to get her students to revise their expectations of themselves, is ever on the alert for personal crises of the kind that she knows can drive students out of school, and "constantly judges herself against an internal spectrum whose extremes are marked 'fascist' and 'bleeding heart.' " Her private life is minimal. She would like to have time for one, but rarely has enough energy even to go out to dinner with friends. She is nearly forty and often feels frustrated and overwhelmed by sadness. About three-quarters of the way through the book, we learn that she is thinking seriously about giving up teaching altogether.

The New York City Board of Education, as Freedman describes it, is revealed to be an institution that seems almost diabolically committed to keeping Siegel and teachers like her from performing their duties. His description of several visits to the board's infamous hiring hall by a veteran teacher at Seward who wishes to wrest his certification from the bureaucratic maw speaks volumes for the plight of the many hapless teachers who must go there to receive the board's word on their pedagogical status. The great majority of Seward Park's teachers conduct five classes a day, for a total of a hundred and forty students—nearly twice the load of an average suburban schoolteacher—and many of them do so without knowing whether they have passed the exams they have taken to qualify them for their jobs. Two years after Siegel took her English licensing exam—and two months after she began her teaching career by helping to teach a bilingual class in history to Hispanic children, without knowing Spanish or much about history—she was informed that she had passed. Since the median salary for city teachers is $37,756, from three thousand to twelve thousand dollars less than that of teachers in suburban high schools, according to Freedman, many teachers are compelled to moonlight. One of Siegel's hardest-working colleagues is John McNamara, a history teacher with twenty years' experience, whose take-home pay is $24,855—approximately the same as that of a sanitation worker. McNamara works weekends (putting a considerable strain on his marriage) as a maître d' at hilariously depicted wedding-recepti hall in New Jersey, and he has al toiled as a taxi-driver, a camp cou sellor, a tutor, a truck driver, a m sorter, a waiter, a salesman, and a gr cery counterman in order to pay l bills and meet his mortgage payment

Seward Park is an ugly school. It h a chain-link fence that at the time Freedman's visit had been broken fo decade and still awaited repair, a cru bling ceiling in the teachers' smoki lounge, two hundred missing windo panes and glass pane and wiring so skitti that when two elect percolators were turn on at the same time th short-circuited an enti floor in the school's a nex, which houses its freshman and sop omore classes. But d crepit public-school buildings are not ing new. The schools I attended mo than thirty years ago in the northe Bronx were in a similar conditio Back then, too, the city's public-scho children received less largesse th their suburban and upstate counte parts. But teachers had desks in the days, and did not have to drag all the belongings from class to class in nyl tote bags, as Siegel and her colleagu do; students did not have to keep the jackets on all day because they wou almost certainly be stolen if left an where; and students did not, for t most part, regularly work long hou after school at menial jobs when th should have been doing their hom work. As the students gather outsi the entrance on opening day, "period cally, a young dealer, someone's bud or cousin or someone Seward Park h lost to the streets, will circle the scho in a BMW or Mercedes," Mr. Free man observes. "The dealer will dri slowly, less to conduct trade than impress and recruit. Temptation tra els with smoked windows and fur sea temptation wears a beeper and a go chain."

"Small Victories" avoids the usu sentimentality and smugness of boo of this kind largely because of t author's excellent reportorial skills a sure grasp of the social demographi and political background of his subje Although his picture of Jessica Sieg and the other teachers is absorbing, it the students who amaze, and, oddly, t

strongest scenes take place away
m the school. One of these depicts a
ss outing to a liberal private school
Long Island, the other a frantic car
to the State University of New
rk at New Paltz to see an admissions
cer who Siegel hopes will be per-
ded to accept several students with
mpressive grades. By the time we
to these two occasions, we have
rned about Vinnie Mickles, whose
ther is in and out of psychiatric
rds, and so leaves her son alone in
apartment with no heat or hot wa-
we've read a Chinese girl's autobi-
aphy (a form of writing routinely
cited by Siegel so that she can get a
se of her students' lives), which tells
her alienation from her adoptive
ents and includes a hint that she is
templating suicide; and we've been
l about rat-infested tenements, beat-
s, incest, hunger, welfare hotels,
nigration traumas, and gang mur-
s. But what makes the sections about
two excursions so wrenching is the
y of hope against the students' over-
elming expectation of failure and
ad of lifelong poverty.
When a group of Seward Park se-
rs arrives at the Locust Valley
ends Academy, one boy, noting the
ool's turreted brick magnificence,
narks that he has never seen a school
this except in "Ferris Bueller's
y Off." In a Spanish class, a Puerto
an boy named Angel Fuster, who,
many of his classmates, has been
rking since he was twelve to aug-
nt his divorced mother's small wel-
e check, is shocked to hear the stu-
its speaking a purer Spanish than he
s. In a math class, he and his friends
appalled by the difficulty of the
blems their contemporaries are solv-
with apparent ease: "All he sees
ore him are eyes impatient for the
t challenge. 'Oh, shit,' Ivan whis-
s to Angel. 'We're gonna have to
this on the S.A.T.,' Angel says.
h, man.' "
When one of the Friends boys ex-
sses surprise that the Seward Park
s are wearing ties, and says he didn't
w that public-school kids had to
ss up, the Seward Park students
pond with sarcasm. "We just wear
spikes," a boy named Luis says.
nd switchblades," Angel adds. In
th, they feel embarrassed by their
bby clothes and comparative lack of
ish. Freedman describes Angel's re-
ion to a poster in the school's elegant

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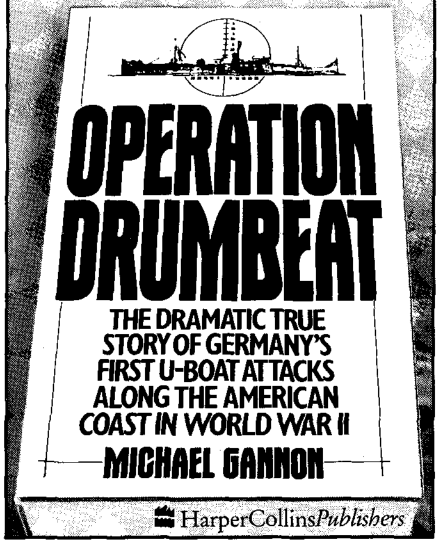
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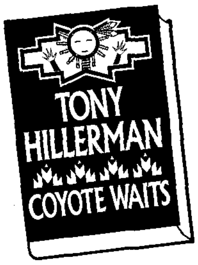

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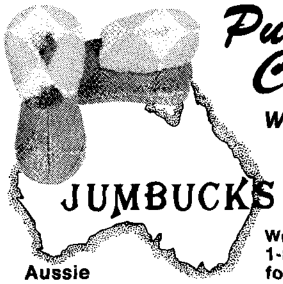

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split-level cafeteria reminding students to save their soda cans for recycling:

> Angel cannot conceive of recycling as an environmental issue, only an economic one, and in his neighborhood nobody... would even consider the chore, *five-cent deposit* or no five-cent deposit. Collecting cans is the labor of the homeless and the drunken and the addicted, pawing through dumpsters with shopping carts at their side, New York City's caste of untouchables. Still, Angel cannot help thinking that at Friends Academy, the Seward Park kids must appear about that desperate.... It is too late, obviously, to change costume, but at least they can change voice. What must their hosts make of Luis' Dominican accent? And Mateo's street slur?... He suggests to the others that they appoint a "designated talker," who will answer all questions for the rest of the visit, and he is elected.

But it is probably Freedman's account of the anxiety-filled, hell-for-leather car trip to SUNY taken by Siegel, Angel, and two others which most nakedly reveals the tenor of both the teachers' and the students' state of mind. Siegel undertakes to drive the students to New Paltz because, although the university is supposed to look only at transcripts and recommendations, she hopes that personal interviews with the admissions officer will enhance her students' chances for acceptance. There are fifteen hundred applications for a hundred and fifty places in the university's special program for disadvantaged youths, and many of the applicants will have higher averages than her charges, but Siegel hopes that their articulateness and determination will win the day. In the past, this ploy has worked; some of her students have made the dean's list at SUNY and served in the student government and helped run the radio station. Her pleadings and proddings are thus looked upon with some interest. Nonetheless, the admissions officer has warned her that he must leave promptly at four-thirty, and, after unforeseen delays in the city and innumerable wrong turns and traffic jams along the way, the group arrives just as he is departing, taking with him, it seems, all hope for the students' future. I won't reveal the outcome of the day; suffice it to say that it is deeply affecting.

When college acceptances and scholarships are at last announced, the recipients' joy is offset by the despair of those who have not been so lucky. At the end of the year, despite all Siegel's efforts and sympathy, two out of six students have failed her advanced journalism class, thirteen out of twenty-fi have failed her beginning journalis class, sixteen out of thirty-three ha failed her first-period English cla fifteen out of thirty-five have failed h second-period English class, and twe ty-two out of thirty-five have failed special course in the cultural history the Lower East Side, which she teach with a colleague. Nearly three-fourt of the failures, a discouraged Sieg tells Freedman, are due to absences.

It is apparently not unusual Seward Park for a student simply vanish. "Across the city," Freedm writes, "almost half the six thousa homeless children of school age cou not be accounted for either by the ce tral board or the school districts." I stead of redoubling its efforts to he locate the students, "the board inexpl cably withdrew from a program th would cross-reference its computer re ords of school enrollments with t Human Resources Administratio computer records of homeless famili addresses," he discovers, and he ad "Disgusted by the decision, the boar ombudsman for homeless children r signed."

Occasionally, Mr. Freedman's em pathy with his subject creates infelic ties. The passages in which he appea to be privy to Jessica Siegel's inmo thoughts, and writes as if he were sh are extremely awkward. Similarly, t sudden switches of locale to rural Ch na and the Dominican Republic (show us the backgrounds of two st dents with whom we have a noddi acquaintance) seem gratuitous, ev though one's knowledge of the tv students is expanded. But these a minor weaknesses in a rich account the life of a remarkable inner-ci school. "Small Victories" is also a con pelling further bit of evidence—in already bulging file—attesting to o nation's desperately inadequate educ tion policies and its virtual abando ment of the poor urban young.

—LIS HARR

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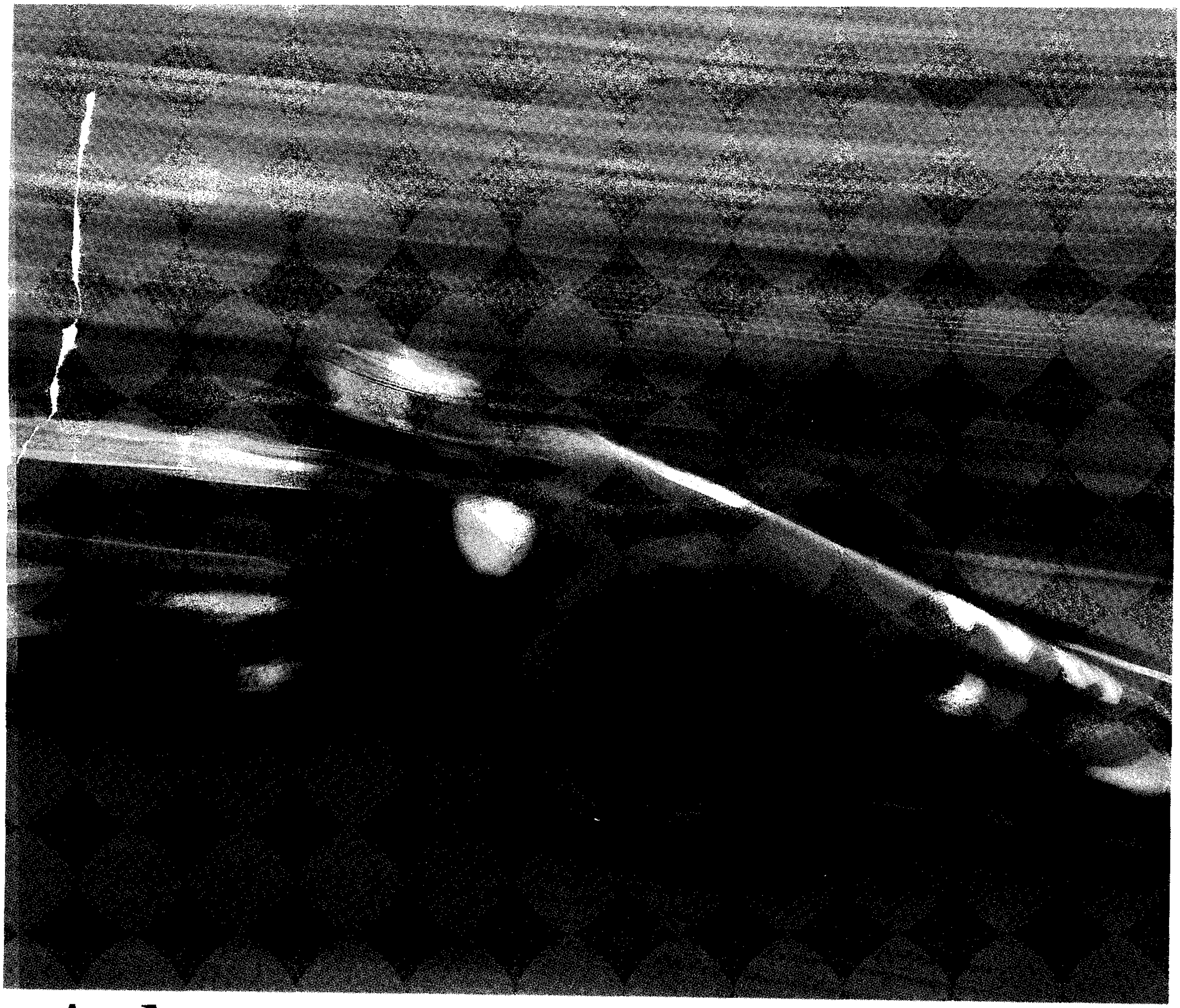

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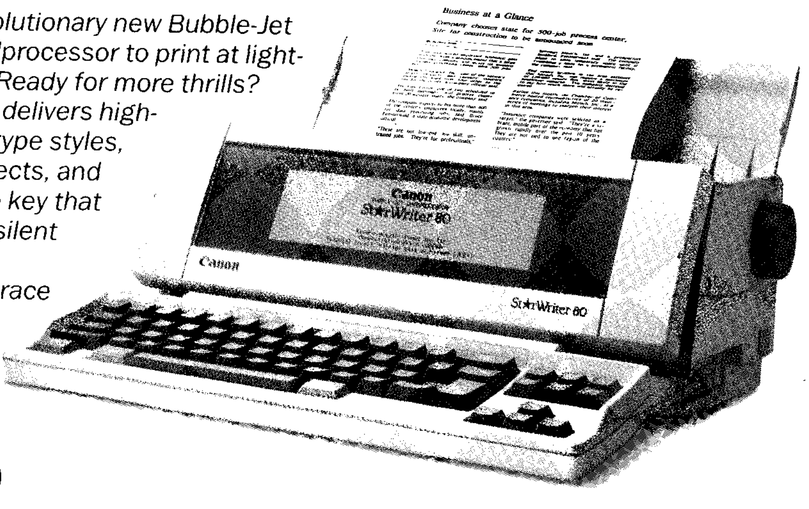

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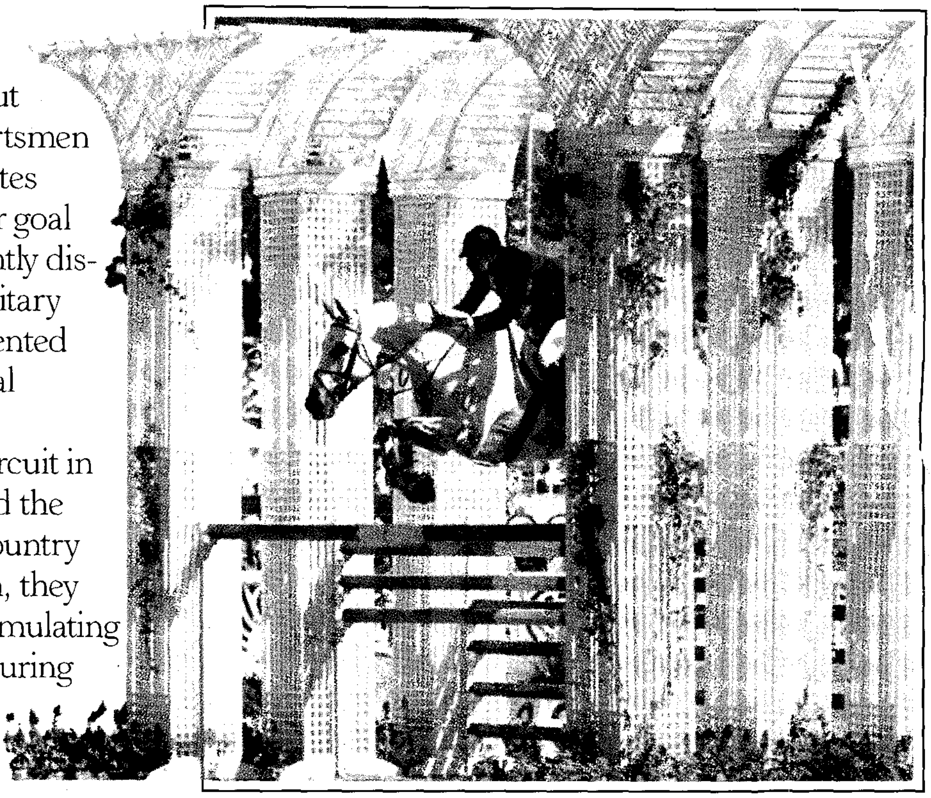

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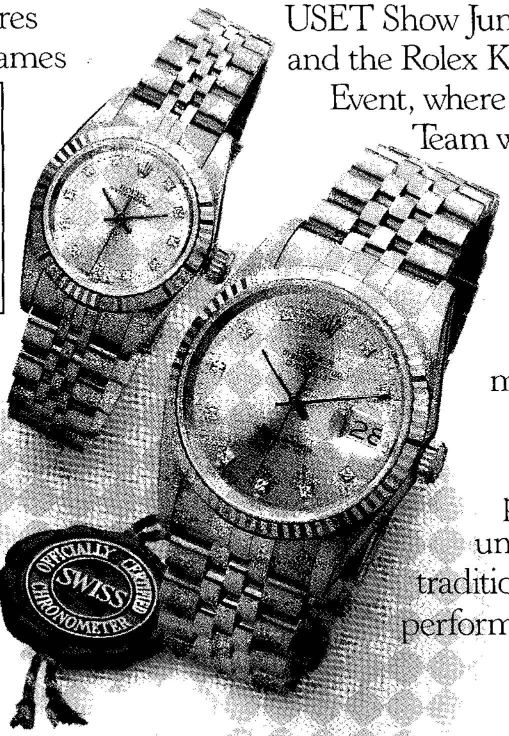
Recent honors include the United States' first Team Gold Medal at the World Show Jumping Championships and two Olympic Silver Medals in Seoul.

U.S. Olympic Silver Medal Show Jumping Team.

Already the USET has embarked on the quadrennial cycle that features the inaugural World Equestrian Games in Stockholm and ends with the Barcelona Olympics. Throughout this period, Team skills will be refined by a challenging series of Rolex-USET events, including the United States Equestrian Team Medal Classes and Finals, the USET Show Jumping Talent Derby, and the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event, where the U.S. Equestrian Team will be selected. The enduring bond between Rolex and the United States Equestrian Team is held fast by a mutual commitment to excellence. That dedication has preserved for each a universally recognized tradition of high performance.



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